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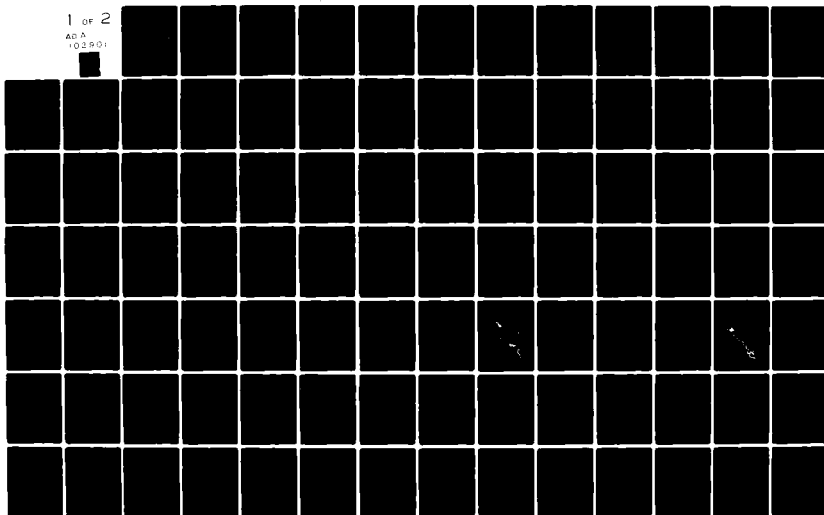
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A DECISION FOR WAR:
THE FORMULATION OF ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY
FROM SEPTEMBER 1754 TO JULY 1755

James R. McLean
by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

JAMES R. MCLEAN. A Decision for War: The Formulation of English Foreign Policy from September 1754 to July 1755. (Under the direction of DR. STEPHEN B. BAXTER).

This essay examines the formulation of English policy toward France from September 1754 to July 1755. During this period Anglo-French relations went through a transformation from the watchful peace established at Aix-la-Chapelle to a state of undeclared war. By using as a framework the negotiations between London and Versailles aimed at resolving the boundary disputes in North America, this study details in chronological order the progress of English diplomacy toward both the continent and the colonies from the receipt of the news of Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity to the rupture of Anglo-French relations ten months later. This work provides a basis for continued discussion into the origins of the Great War for Empire, the complex interrelationships between Europe and her overseas possessions in the eighteenth century, and their impact upon continental diplomacy.

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PREFACE

Most students of English diplomatic history in the eighteenth century have viewed the period between 1748 and 1756, and the recommencement of the war which had been postponed at Aix-la-Chapelle, in one of two lights. Historians interested in continental affairs have concentrated on the events leading to the Diplomatic Revolution and the beginning of the Seven Years' War. These men and women mark the start of the Anglo-French portion of this conflict in May 1756 with the formal declaration of war by England. On the other hand, scholars of imperial history, who look upon these years in terms of the origins of the Great War for the Empire, state that the struggle began in July 1754 when George Washington surrendered at Fort Necessity. There are a number of studies which describe English relations either with the continent or the colonies, but none which analyze the impact of events overseas on the formulation and execution of English policy in Europe. This essay seeks to fill part of this gap through an examination in detail of the forces which shaped England's policy toward France, using the Anglo-French court to court negotiations as a framework for discussion, from the time word of Washington's defeat reached London in September 1754 to the breaking off of diplomatic ties in July 1755.

This period has been chosen for several reasons. First, it was during these months that Anglo-French relations went through a

transition from the watchful peace declared at Aix-la-Chapelle to a state of undeclared war. Additionally, George II's hopes for a renewal of the Grand Alliance shattered in the late Spring of 1755 under the pressures generated by the fear of an imminent war between England and France. The disintegration of the System forced the King to take new measures to protect his continental interests which led to the signing of the Russian Treaty in September 1755 and the Convention of Westminster in January 1756.

This chronological study attempts to describe how news of events in Europe and America affected the formulation of English foreign policy. Little work has been done to investigate the interrelationships between London's continental and colonial policies. The chief primary sources used were reproductions of the Newcastle and Hardwicke papers located in the British Museum, documents from the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, and journals of contemporary politicians in both England and France. The focus of secondary works fall in three general categories: European, colonial and military. Browning, Broglie, Duchêne, Williams and particularly Horn limit themselves to analysis of European affairs, while Hill, Lodge, Muret and Waddington give more complete discussions of events overseas. The imperial historians, such as Bird, Dorn, Higgonet, O'Meara, Priestley and Stanley tend to restrict themselves to the relations between colonies and their mother countries. There are some notable exceptions. The works of Gipson, Pares and Savelle are excellent, offering insight and detail on the complex relationships between Europe and her overseas possessions.

Every major war has its historians, and this one is no exception. The naval war is handled well by Graham, Pares and Richmond. Corbett,

Savory and Whitworth cover the land war in Europe, while Bird, O'Meara and Pargellis describe the American campaigns. Unfortunately, because of the restricted scope of this paper, the works of Pargellis, Savory and Whitworth were not of much value. Biographies of Newcastle and Cumberland, by Browning and Charteris respectively, were also very useful. However, Browning's discussion of colonial affairs is inadequate and Charteris too readily accepts the Duke's simplistic anti-French views on foreign policy. In addition to primary and secondary sources, some contemporary newspapers and pamphlets were examined. Finally, the spelling and punctuation of all quotations has been changed to conform with modern usage.

The belief that the tone of English foreign policy toward France changed to accomodate alterations in the European and American situations is the central contention of this essay. Because this paper is not an examination of why England and France went to war, but rather how the rupture came about, it is divided into five sections which portray distinct phases of Anglo-French relations during the period in chronological order. The Introduction describes the major goals of George II's foreign policy, how it was conducted, examines the Old System, and details the continental and colonial situations in the summer of 1754. The second chapter deals with the English decision in the autumn to meet the French threat in America with force, demonstrates the direct relationship between England's position in Europe and her conduct overseas, and recounts the establishment of the court to court negotiations. The next section details the actual attempt by both sides to find a negotiated settlement and England's decision to begin

hostilities in America. Chapter Four examines London's continuation of the talks as a means to placate France while England augmented her armed forces and desperately tried to restore the System. The final chapter contains a description of the effects which Austrian abandonment of the System and the King's absence while in Hanover had upon English foreign policy, as well as an account of events leading to the termination of the formal negotiations and the breaking off of diplomatic relations.

PREFACE ENDNOTES

¹ Harrison Bird, Battle for a Continent (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); Jules Victor Albert Broglie, Duc de Broglie L'Alliance Autrichienne (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897) and Histoire et Diplomatie (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1889); Reed Browning, The Duke of Newcastle (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1975); Walter L. Dorn, Competition for Empire 1740-1763 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940; Harper Torchbooks, 1963); Albert Duchêne, La Politique Coloniale de la France: Le Ministère des Colonies depuis Richelieu (Paris: Payot, 1928); Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, 15 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936-70); Patrice Louis-René Higonnet, "The Origins of the Seven Years' War," Journal of Modern History 40 (March 1968): 57-90; David Jayne Hill, A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe, 3 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914); David Bayne Horn, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and European Diplomacy (1747-58) (London: George G. Harrap and Co., 1939) and Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967); Richard Lodge, Great Britain and Prussia in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923; reprint ed., New York: Octagon Books, 1972) and various articles; Pierre Muret, La Prépondérance Anglaise (1715-1763) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942); Walter O'Meara, Guns at the Forks (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965); Richard Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936) and "American versus Continental Warfare 1739-63," English Historical Review 51(1936): 429-65; Herbert Ingram Priestley, France Overseas through the Old Regime: A Study of European Expansion (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1939); Max Savelle, The Diplomatic History of the Canadian Boundary 1749-1763 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1940) and with the assistance of Margaret Anne Fisher, The Origins of American Diplomacy: The International History of Angloamerica, 1492-1763 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967); George F. G. Stanley, New France: The Last Phase 1744-1760 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968); Richard Waddington, La Guerre de Sept Ans: Histoire Diplomatique et Militaire, 5 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1899-1914) and Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances: Préliminaires de la Guerre de Sept Ans 1754-1756 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1896); Basil Williams, Carteret and Newcastle: A Contrast in Contemporaries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943; reprinted, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966) and The Whig Supremacy 1714-1760 2nd ed., revised by C. H. Stuart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

² Harrison Bird; Reed Browning; Evan Charteris, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and the Seven Years' War (London: Hutchinson and

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

English foreign policy decisions in the mid-eighteenth century can be understood best if examined from the perspectives of the men who made them. They were never simply the products of vast impersonal forces such as commercial rivalry or imperialism. Policy evolved in a competitive political environment in which numerous domestic and foreign factors influenced the English court. Some historians regard the years between 1748 and 1756 as a slack period in which Europe sought to catch its breath after the War of the Austrian Succession while it waited to be catapulted by the Diplomatic Revolution into the Seven Years' War. This is a gross simplification, and like most of its genre, utterly wrong. As late as the fall of 1755, none of the major powers seriously considered the possibility of an alliance between Austria, France and Russia or of an Anglo-Prussian League. Europe was struggling to recover from the enormous expense of the War of the Austrian Succession, and while another war might be thought inevitable, every country sought to postpone or limit the future conflict.

Throughout his reign, George II firmly retained control of the overall goals of English foreign relations. The creation and execution of policies to achieve these objectives were left to the King's Servants, or Inner Cabinet, who headed the ministry.¹ These men could not have

risen to their high positions in government if they had not supported the King's measures and earned his confidence. The policies the ministry formulated reflected the desires of the King, who only rarely overruled the advice of his ministers. This is not to say that George II had absolute control over all foreign policy matters. Parliament controlled the government's purse strings, and while the Civil List and the King's Hanoverian revenue gave him some degree of independence, expenditures on a large scale had to be authorized by the House of Commons. The King carefully did not commit himself to policies which his ministry could not see through Parliament.

In this era, continental, not colonial, affairs governed English foreign relations. The major goals of English foreign policy were, in simplistic terms, the defense of the Netherlands and the containment of French influence. For centuries, England had fought to keep the Low Countries from falling into the hands of her enemies. By the mid-eighteenth century the old strategic and commercial reasons had been reinforced by new financial and political ties with the United Provinces. France was the richest and strongest nation in Europe, and the traditional enemy of England. The power and prestige of the Court of Versailles had increased in Scandinavia, Germany and Eastern Europe, as well as overseas in North America, the West Indies, Africa and India. But as uneasy as London felt about France, Versailles was equally apprehensive of the rising power of England. Consequently, the two nations competed for influence among the neutral and non-committed courts of Europe, and sought to weaken one another by stripping away their opponent's supporters, while strengthening their own alliance systems.

The abasement of France and the protection of the Pays Bas were central to English national interests. George II supported these policies not only because he was the King of England, but also because they coincided with the interests of the House of Hanover and his own personal beliefs. The King was a firm believer in the Grand Alliance and considered catholic France the greatest threat to his crown and his Maison.² French influence in Sweden, Denmark, Prussia and Poland enabled Versailles to meddle in the affairs of his native Germany and to pose a direct threat to his electoral dominions. The King also had private reasons to support the defense of the Low Countries. As an adherent of the myth of the Grand Alliance, he thought Dutch support critical to any English action against the French on the continent. Considering himself the political heir of William III, the man who had placed the Hanoverians on the throne of England, George II felt personal ties of loyalty to the Stadholderate and the House of Orange. These were reinforced by bonds of kinship when his daughter married the Prince of Orange.³ In a strategic sense, the maintenance of anti-French governments in the Low Countries was essential to the defense of the King's German possessions. The swiftest and surest link between Herrenhausen and London lay across the Dutch Republic. Moreover, French armies could not march directly against Hanover through Westphalia if their flanks were threatened by allied forces stationed in the Pays Bas.

The defense of the Low Countries from France was founded upon the System. Begun in 1678 with an Anglo-Dutch mutual defense pact, it achieved its final form in the Barrier Treaty of 1715. Because they would not allow the Netherlands to remain under the control of the House of Bourbon at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-

1713), the Maritime Powers, as England and the United Provinces were often called, decided to transfer possession of them to Austria.⁴ In return, Austria promised never to cede any portion of the country to France. The Court of Vienna pledged to furnish three-fifths of a corps of 30-35,000 troops for the defense of their new province, and to pay the Dutch an annual subsidy of 1,250,000 florins to provide the remaining two-fifths.

Because neither the Netherlands nor the Dutch Republic had defendable natural frontiers, the physical defense of the entire region rested upon a series of barrier fortresses along the French border. These were to be garrisoned by Dutch troops, but paid for by the Austrians.⁵ The plan, however, did not work. During the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the Dutch surrendered some of the fortresses with scarcely a struggle, and by the end of the war, Marshal Saxe's armies had destroyed them all.

The System also had commercial aspects. The Maritime Powers, wanting to protect their trade with the Low Countries and to restrict possible Austrian competition, had stipulated in Article 26 of the Barrier Treaty that the Court of Vienna could not increase tariffs in the Netherlands without their consent. In 1731 the Habsburg Emperor, Charles VI, was forced to end the activities of the promising Ostend Company in order to secure the approval of London and The Hague for his Pragmatic Sanction.⁶ Furthermore, as the costs of goods and materials rose, the Flemish could not compete with the less expensive products of the English and Dutch merchants and manufacturers, who received their raw materials at cheaper prices.

After the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), the Court of Vienna postponed making the required annual payments to the Dutch for the maintenance of the Barrier until a plan could be worked out between Austria and the Republic for the repair of the damaged fortresses. Maria Theresa demanded the abolition of Article 26, which she stated crippled the commercial development of Flanders. Claiming full sovereignty in the Austrian Netherlands, the Empress imposed higher tariffs in order to provide her subjects parity with competing Dutch and English merchants. The Maritime Powers were outraged. They argued that the Barrier Treaty had limited Imperial sovereignty in the region, that Flanders was actually held in common by London, The Hague and the Hofburg, and that Austria's action was a violation of her treaty obligations. Both sides proposed several commercial treaties, but negotiations faltered on this issue.⁷

The defense of the Netherlands, and subsequently that of the United Provinces and the Electorate of Hanover, depended upon substantial support from the Court of Vienna. The System had been significantly weakened by the War of the Austrian Succession. Distrust and suspicion characterized relations between the three powers. Nevertheless, because the military strength of the alliance depended upon the participation of the large Austrian army, it was imperative that the English ministry strengthen the alliance by bringing Austria back into the fold. Newcastle, in 1749, hoped to use a scheme to elect the Empress Queen's son Joseph King of the Romans in order to gain the support of the House of Habsburg, while simultaneously increasing the stature of George II within the Empire and providing the System with a ready force of subsidy troops. The Austrians received the project

coolly, and French and Prussian opposition killed it by 1752.⁸ In 1750, George II acceded to all but the secret anti-Prussian clause of the Treaty of the Two Empresses (1746). England, responding to repeated requests from the Hofburg to secure a Russian army to hold Prussia in check, began talks with St. Petersburg in 1753. But all of the ministry's attempts to win Austrian support stumbled over two issues. England refused to concede to Habsburg demands that Britain join an anti-Prussian alliance and also that the Maritime Powers recognize the Empress's full sovereignty over the Netherlands.

The Dutch emerged from the War of the Austrian Succession with the conviction that their security and that of the Netherlands could be insured only by a strong barrier, which in turn depended upon Austria's active participation in and support of the system. The Hofburg's lack of cooperation during the war and its obstinate behavior over the commercial treaty and barrier payments since Aix-la-Chapelle created suspicion and ill-will among the Dutch toward Vienna. In the States General, two large factions rose which drew different lessons from the war. One supported the Stadholderate, the House of Orange, and the government of the Princess Royal. To these people, the war proved that Dutch defense was bound to that of the Netherlands, that France was a real and potent danger to their country and way of life, and that their salvation rested upon English and particularly Austrian support for the System. The other group, based primarily among the powerful urban oligarchies, believed that the outcome of the war demonstrated the inability of the Barrier System, even with active assistance from Vienna and London, to prevent France from sweeping across Flanders and invading the United Provinces. They advocated the

abandonment of the pro-British policies which had ruined their nation for seventy years, and the adoption of a neutral role in the event of any future Anglo-French conflict in Europe. In the fall of 1754, the Princess Royal's party controlled the States General. But Imperial intransigence and the fear that Versailles might strike at England through her continental allies to compensate for future colonial losses steadily eroded the credibility of the government.

The second major goal of George II's foreign policy was the reduction of French influence in Europe and overseas. To counter French activity in Acadia, England transformed Nova Scotia into a military colony in 1749. The ministry stationed several regiments there and established the port of Halifax to rival the French fortress of Louisburg. By 1754, the French and English East India Companies had fought for control of the lucrative Indian trade for over a decade with the active support of their respective governments, which periodically sent out squadrons of warships and reinforcements of regular troops. The question of the possession of a contested group of islands in the West Indies was to be decided by an Anglo-French commission.

The two nations also schemed against each other at all the major courts of Europe. London nearly succeeded in separating Cologne from France and tightening the bond between the Maritime Powers and Austria before Versailles blocked the Imperial Election Plan. As it was, Britain managed to obtain Dutch and Austrian cooperation in securing subsidy treaties with Bavaria and Saxony.⁹ France, on the other hand, renewed her subsidy with Denmark, exerted great influence with many of the lesser German Princes through her powerful Prussian ally, strengthened her position in the Baltic, and stirred up trouble at the Sublime Porte to distract Russia and Austria.

England's greatest foreign policy triumph of the inter-war years proved to be the weakening of the Bourbon Pacte de Famille and the restoration of relations between London and Madrid. Spain possessed the largest colonial empire in the New World and her position in the event of an Anglo-French confrontation either in Europe or America was of the utmost importance. France drew attention to the bonds of blood and religion between the two branches of the House of Bourbon and stressed Anglo-Spanish differences. Versailles wanted to protect its dominance of the Spanish-American trade through Cadiz, and in case of war, to have the use of Spanish ports and the assistance of the large Spanish fleet to strike at British commerce in the Caribbean and Mediterranean. London and Madrid resolved some of their principal commercial differences in 1749, but tensions still ran high between the two nations. So England achieved a great foreign policy coup in July 1754 when the English ambassador orchestrated the fall of the Marquis of Ensenada, the powerful leader of the pro-French faction at the Spanish court.

King Ferdinand VI, wishing to steer a neutral course in both Europe and the colonies, dismissed Ensenada for having taken military action against the English in the Caribbean without his knowledge. This weakened but did not break the Pacte de Famille. Questionable English trade practices and the presence of English settlers on the coast of Honduras remained sources of Anglo-Spanish friction. The English ministry realized the importance of retaining the goodwill and neutrality of the Court of Madrid, for if Spain declined to support France, the superior size and strength of the English colonies and navy would ensure an eventual British victory in any colonial or maritime war. Knowing that

whichever side Spain favored could take a tougher stance in America and in Europe, both Versailles and London actively wooed Madrid for her support.

The orientation of foreign relations in the mid-eighteenth century was continental, not colonial. Overseas trade was not the dominant factor in the economy of any major nation and played a significant role only in those of Spain, Great Britain and the United Provinces. While there had been conflicts in the New World, Africa and Asia, these traditionally had been considered beyond the pale of the European political arena. Although there was conflict on a global scale during the War of the Austrian Succession, the causes of the war in Europe were not those of the action overseas. Colonial struggles were primarily over regional issues which previously had been disputed at the local level and which rival provincial factions had escalated, using the war between their mother countries on the continent as an excuse. European diplomats believed in the concept of a "line of amity" beyond which the full impact of international did not apply. Actions which could be taken with impunity in the colonies would promptly lead to war if brought to the continent. This line had never been defined and its precise location was open to wide interpretation, but it retreated with the expansion of commerce, communications and civilization.

North America was one of the first places where the vagueness of this line was tested. Before 1740, English and French colonists had clashed openly only in Acadia. They competed relatively peacefully for the Indian fur trade in Canada, and scarcely paid attention to the vast regions beyond the Allegheny Mountains. By 1748, the English had gained

the upper hand in the fur trade along the Great Lakes, and had established several trading posts in the Ohio Valley.

The Governor General of New France, the Marquis de Galissonière, was one of the first to recognize this English expansion as a direct threat to France's position in the New World. Basing his territorial claims on the voyages of early French explorers, he insisted that the lands lying in the basins of the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence and Ohio Rivers were French, thus restricting the English colonies to the coastal region east of the mountains. In 1749, he advocated that France build a string of forts from the Mississippi to Acadia to reinforce her claims and prevent further English encroachments. Subsequent Governors General swiftly executed Galissonière's policy. The construction of Fort Duquesne at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers completed his plan, and the defeat of George Washington at Great Meadows in July 1754 vindicated it.

The English saw things from a different perspective. England's territorial claims were based on the original colonial charters and on treaties with local Indians. Up until the 1740s, the English colonists had paid little mind to the French in Canada and the Ohio. But as deer and beaver in the older Indian territories became scarcer, the attention of trappers and traders moved west. At the same time, pressure from a rapidly increasing population saw the movement of colonists into western New England, New York and Pennsylvania, and south along the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge into Virginia and the Carolinas.

The War of the Austrian Succession exacerbated the relationship between the two rival colonial powers in the New World, and the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle did as little to resolve Anglo-French differences in America as it had in Europe. The treaty required France to cede Acadia

to England, according to the limits stipulated in the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), and further stated that all other territory be restored to the status quo ante bellum. Problems arose immediately.

London and Versailles differed sharply on the boundaries of Acadia, which never had been specified at Utrecht. England wanted all of Nova Scotia plus the western shore of the Bay of Fundy. France, on the other hand, insisted that Acadia was only the southeastern portion of the peninsula, and demanded the remainder of Nova Scotia and all of the lands north of New England. Control of the St. Lawrence River and of a land route from Montreal to Louisburg were commercial and strategic necessities for France. If either were lost, all of New France would be in jeopardy.¹⁰

The phrase status quo ante bellum raised two questions. First, there was no recognized status quo between the two nations anywhere in North America. In Acadia, each side supported different claims. Along the Great Lakes and on the Ohio River, the issue never had been addressed seriously. Secondly, France and England referred to different wars. Paris assumed that the treaty referred to the conflict just ended, that of the Austrian Succession. Hoping to force France to demolish several vital forts in Nova Scotia, New York and on the Great Lakes, London played upon a technicality and insisted that the phrase referred to the War of the Spanish Succession.

In the summer of 1754, France held a temporary advantage in the colonies. The white inhabitants of New France were all French colonists who shared a common culture, government, religion and martial tradition. They occupied a series of strategically located military garrisons which dominated the important routes of trade and communication, and had the

support of a number of the most important Indian tribes on the frontier. The English colonies, while more prosperous and having almost thirty times the population, lacked cohesion and central direction. Provincial legislatures were slow to provide men, money and material for defense even when directly threatened. Those not in immediate danger were reluctant to offer assistance at all. Since Aix-la-Chapelle, France had erected forts on the Chignecto Isthmus and the western shore of the Bay of Fundy; reinforced Crown Point and several key posts on Lakes Erie and Ontario; built strongholds which controlled the upper Ohio Valley; and driven the English back across the Alleghenies. The French, in fact, possessed all the disputed territories in North America and had forced England onto the defensive.

The English ministry, however, had no doubts that the superiority of their navy and the overwhelming strength of the American colonies would assure an eventual victory over the French in the New World. They were more concerned how Versailles would react to an inevitable defeat in a colonial and maritime war. France's strength lay on the continent, where she possessed what was considered to be the largest and most powerful army in Europe. Supported by her Prussian ally with its awesome forces and dynamic warrior-King, France was practically invincible. The War of the Austrian Succession had shown that the combined forces of Austria, England, and the United Provinces and several of the lesser German states could not defeat the Franco-Prussian coalition in Europe. France could win any war on the continent if she was prepared to pay the cost. But with the French economy staggering under the debt accrued in the last war, Versailles was very reluctant to begin a new one. Bearing this in mind, Newcastle hoped to form an

alliance system just strong enough to deter the French from commencing another war.¹¹ The foundation, of course, was the System, which he later augmented with Saxon and Bavarian subsidy treaties. The most critical member of the coalition was Austria, whose large army would provide well over half the alliance's troops. This constituted yet another reason why England had to secure the support of the Court of Vienna.

The creation of an effective system of alliances would achieve George II's foreign policy goals: the protection of the Low Countries, the Dutch Republic and his electorate, and the containment of France. The system, however, would only activate itself if the territories of one of the member nations were attacked. The French alliances were predicated upon the same principle. The key questions, then, were what action constituted a casus foederis or a casus belli. What level of hostilities in Europe or in the colonies would require the implementation of the treaties, and more importantly, what level would be considered aggression? If England was termed the aggressor, her system of defensive alliances would be undone, and the King's policies utterly ruined. The ministers had to carefully evaluate every military action they took overseas for its impact on Europe.

ENDNOTES

¹In the period of this study, the group consisted of the First Lord of the Treasury, the Duke of Newcastle; the Lord President of the Cabinet Council, the Earl of Granville; the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Hardwicke; and the two Secretaries of State, the Earl of Holderness for the Northern Department and Sir Thomas Robinson for the Southern. They also invited experts in various fields to sit with them while discussing particular issues. Lord Anson, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir John Ligonier, Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, and the Earl of Halifax, the President of the Board of Trade often attended meetings on naval, military and colonial matters respectively. The Duke of Cumberland joined the Inner Cabinet only when he was head of the Regency. Henry Fox, the Secretary at War, did not enter the policy-making group until the spring of 1755 when he broke with Pitt, made his peace with the ministry, and accepted a position on the Cabinet Council.

²For a discussion of George II and the role of the Grand Alliance in English foreign policy see Stephen B. Baxter's "The Myth of the Grand Alliance in the Eighteenth Century," in Paul R. Sellin and Stephen B. Baxter, Anglo-Dutch Cross Currents in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1976).

³Princess Anne, the second child and eldest daughter of George II, married the Prince of Orange in 1734. Her husband was chosen as Stadholder in 1747 and ruled as William IV until his death in 1751. The Princess Royal governed the Republic until 1759, during the minority of her son, William V.

⁴After the War of the Spanish Succession, the Dutch allowed their navy to fall into neglect and disrepair. In 1745, the Earl of Chesterfield remarked that they possessed the title of "maritime power" only out of courtesy. Walter L. Dorn, Competition for Empire, 1740-1763 (New York: Harper and Row, 1940; Harper Torchbook, 1963), p. 103.

⁵There are clear and perceptive discussions of the Barrier System in Carl William Eldon's 'England's Subsidy Policy Towards the Continent during the Seven Years' War,' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1938) [hereafter referred to as England's Subsidy Policy], pp. 1-7; and Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, vol. 6, The Great War for the Empire: The Years of Defeat, 1754-1757 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946) [hereafter referred to as Years of Defeat], pp. 351-72.

⁶The texts of the Barrier Treaty of 1715 and the Commercial Treaty of 1731 are in Charles Jenkinson, ed., A Collection of All the Treaties

of Peace, Alliance and Commerce between Great Britain and Other Powers from the Treaty Signed at Munster in 1648, to the Treaties signed at Paris in 1783, 3 vols. (London: J. Debrett, 1785), vol. 2, pp. 148-73 and 318-33.

⁷ Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, pp. 6-8.

⁸ Basil Williams' prejudice against Newcastle led him to term the election plan "absurd." But more recent scholarship by David Bayne Horn and Reed Browning has shown that the project had strong support from George II and their Imperial Majesties. Horn argues that it failed primarily because of Newcastle's highhanded treatment of the Austrians and his failure to understand the complexities of the Imperial Constitution. Browning agrees that these played a part, but maintains that the plan died when France organized opposition to it. See: Williams, The Whig Supremacy 1714-1760, 2nd ed., revised by C. H. Stuart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); Horn, "The Cabinet Controversy on Subsidy Treaties in Time of Peace," English Historical Review 45(July 1930), "The Origin of the Proposed Election of the King of the Romans," English Historical Review, 42(July 1927), and "The Duke of Newcastle and the Origins of the Diplomatic Revolution," in The Diversity of History, eds. J. H. Elliot and H. G. Koenigsberger (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970); and Browning's articles, "The Duke of Newcastle and the Imperial Election Plan, 1749-1754," Journal of British Studies 7(November 1967) and "The British Orientation of Austrian Foreign Policy, 1749-1754," Central European History 1(December 1968).

⁹ Both Bavaria and Saxony promised to provide a force of 6000 men upon request if any of the allies were attacked and to vote in any Imperial election as George II directed. The Bavarian subsidy, signed 22 August 1750, called for a sum of £ 40,000 per annum for six years, half of which England paid while Austria and the United Provinces each contributed a quarter. The Saxon treaty, signed 13 September 1751, required an annual payment £ 48,000 for four years, two-thirds provided by London and the remainder by The Hague.

¹⁰ New France depended upon its mother country for nearly all of its manufactured goods and upon the river traffic for most of its commerce. During the winter months the St. Lawrence froze over, which left the land route from Montreal across the Chignecto Isthmus and the northern edge of the peninsula to Louisburg the only line of communication between Canada and France.

¹¹ Newcastle wrote Hardwicke on 25 August 1749 (O.S.) that "if we had a tolerable system and force upon the continent, though by no means equal to France and Prussia, the experience of the last war shows us France would not wantonly in the present circumstances engage in a new war, the event of which might be doubtful. . . ." British Museum Additional Manuscripts [hereafter referred to as B.M. Add. MS.] 35410, f. 126, cited in Horn's "The Duke of Newcastle and the Origins of the Diplomatic Revolution" in The Diversity of History, eds. J. H. Elliot and H. G. Koenigsberger, p. 252.

CHAPTER II

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1754

Throughout the summer of 1754 tension mounted between France and England in North America. The Board of Trade and the English colonial governors complained to the English ministry that France was encroaching systematically upon the King's rights and privileges in the New World. The French in Canada had made settlements on the St. John River in Nova Scotia, moved into the Kennebeck River valley, seized an English fort on the Ohio and were moving large numbers of troops into these areas to consolidate their gains.¹ The Board of Trade, responding to a cabinet directive to draw up a plan for a "General Concert" among the English colonies to prevent and repel French aggression, called for a more centralized administration headed by a general officer.² While Newcastle did not act on the Board's suggestion, he clearly intended to take some type of action: "The first point we have laid down is that the colonies must not be abandoned. That our rights and possessions in North America must be maintained and the French obliged to desist from their hostile attempts to dispossess us."³

On 4 September the news of Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity on 3 July and subsequent withdrawal beyond the Alleghenies reached London. A body of French soldiers, acting under the orders of Louis XV to maintain the rights and possessions of his Crown, decisively

defeated a detachment of English troops, acting under similar orders from their King. Newcastle lamented to the Earl of Granville, Lord President of the Council, that although the problems in North America were clearly visible, the solutions were not, "for tho' we may have ten times the number of people in our colonies, they don't seem to be able to defend themselves, even with the assistance of our money."⁴ The Earl of Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, agreed that "'Tis monstrous that people will not help themselves."⁵

No one doubted that a military response should be made, but the manner, type and size of the expedition were matters for debate. Attorney General William Murray, one of Newcastle's ablest speakers in the House of Commons, was the first to propose a plan. Arguing that France would use any negotiations on the issue to gain time to consolidate her position, he insisted that "if anything is to be done, it should be done instantly, without noise and as far as may be, under another pretense."⁶ Murray urged that London raise thousands of troops in the colonies, supply them with English arms, and send half-pay officers and non-commissioned officers from the over-staffed Irish regiments to lead them.⁷

The First Minister submitted several of these ideas to the King, who stated that he was willing to send a Major General and half-pay officers, with arms and money to North America, though he did not favor the use of provincial troops to complete a task which had been shown at Great Meadows to be beyond their ability.⁸ If regulars must be sent, Newcastle suggested that it be the Highland Regiment.⁹ Although he did not oppose sending a general officer to North America, he was leery of the "ill consequences to be apprehended from uniting too closely the

Northern Colonies with each other, an independency upon this country being to be apprehended from such a union."¹⁰ Moreover, he thought that no action should be attempted in the next few months due to the current state of foreign affairs and the fact that the first session of the newly elected parliament would be more concerned with contested elections.¹¹

On 13 September, Charles Townshend submitted his proposal for the solution of the American crisis to his uncle, the Duke of Newcastle. He urged the forming of two American regiments: the first to be created by placing the seven existing independent companies in North America in one location and under the command of a senior English officer experienced in colonial wars and with the area; the other to be raised in the colonies and officered by Americans. An English commander-in-chief and his English staff would maintain British control. This, Townshend argued, would be far cheaper than sending inexperienced and unacclimatized officers and troops to America. In order to quickly push the French off English territory, thus shortening the war and saving money, he insisted Britain take the offensive in America.¹² Townshend also informed his uncle that he was drafting parliamentary bills which would provide the colonies a regular revenue to be used for self-defense and which would place all the provinces under unified control.¹³

Once George II had approved sending a Major General and half-pay officers to America, Newcastle was forced to include the King's son, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, in the decision-making process. As head of the army, one of England's most experienced and able commanders, and the dispenser of army patronage, the Duke was obviously a key person to be consulted when planning a military operation. Yet

it was a choice Newcastle had been loath to make. The First Minister always feared competition in the Closet and fought to eliminate any person or group which threatened to wrest the ascendancy from h' there. He remembered the dominant role His Royal Highness played during the War of the Austrian Succession and at Aix-la-Chapelle, and was apprehensive that with the increasing possibility of an Anglo-French rupture the Duke would regain the trust and confidence of the King to the extent he had enjoyed it in the last war.

The ministry was vulnerable in the House of Commons because it had no real leader there to fill the vacuum left by the death of Henry Pelham. What made Cumberland even more dangerous was his close friendship with Henry Fox, the able and ambitious Secretary at War. Newcastle rightly feared the potential strength of a Cumberland-Fox coalition, combining the former's influence, patronage and access to the monarch with the latter's energy, parliamentary skills and debating ability in the House of Commons.¹⁴ When Newcastle finally sent Sir Thomas Robinson as an emissary to the Duke on 15 September, he did so only after having coordinated his action with the King. The First Minister wished to limit Cumberland's input and so instructed Robinson to ask only for His Royal Highness' recommendation on the proper Major General and half-pay officers to be sent to America.¹⁵

Cumberland took full advantage of the opportunity to return to the policy making level. He asked for and received all the information on the projected plans for the defense of North America, including Townshend's proposal, so "that he might be master of the whole, as well civil as military."¹⁶ Although not pleased with the suggestions to regiment the independent companies or to raise local troops, he strongly

favored the plan submitted by the Board of Trade and seconded by
 Townshend to centralize colonial administration under the direction
 "of some great person of quality and distinction, after the manner of
 the Spaniards," under whom the Major General would serve.¹⁷ The Duke
 instructed Robinson to return in one week for his reply.¹⁸

Nearly three weeks had passed since the news of Washington's defeat
 and the ministry had still not taken any action. Political pressure
 grew:

Everybody is full of North America and our defeat there.
 The opposers I hear will endeavor to make some attack
 upon it. The King is in haste to have something done.
 His Royal Highness . . . won't yet determine anything . . .
 It is so difficult to know what to do, that I am sure
 Your Lordship will think we cannot be too cautious, nor
 too expeditious in determining something . . . In short,
 something must be resolved, and that something must be
 (if possible) effectual.¹⁹

The King rejected Newcastle's scheme of dispatching the Highland Regiment
 and Cumberland's of sending a civil minister.²⁰ Newcastle had had his
 opportunity to take charge of war policy and formulate an effective
 plan for the defense of the colonies in North America, but had failed.
 Now it was someone else's turn.

On 22 September, true to his word, the Duke offered Robinson "his
 opinion," which came to form the basis of the English strategy towards
 the French in North America for the next nine months. He recommended
 Major General Edward Braddock for the colonial command, and joined the
 King and Hardwicke in dismissing Newcastle's idea to send the Highland
 Regiment and raise independent companies in its stead.²¹ Instead, he
 argued that

. . . it would be better to send immediately two regiments
 upon the Irish establishment, and upon their present low
 footing, to be completed in America, and that, not in

Virginia only, but from the other colonies too, who should furnish instantly their quotas of men.²²

The Duke's strategic plan echoed Townshend's insistence upon offensive measures to drive the French from disputed territory. Cumberland envisaged a multi-pronged attack covering each of the three contested areas: Acadia, the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley.

His Highness thinks the operation must be in several parts, particularly Crown Point, the regaining a footing on the Ohio, and building forts there to cut the French chain from Quebec to the Mississippi, and still more particularly, the attacking the French forts upon the neck of the peninsula at the head of the Bay of Fundy, all which His Royal Highness thought we were authorized to do as the French had so notoriously infringed the convention, for making no encroachments during the negotiations of the Commissaries.²³

Cumberland knew that the quickest way to victory was to forcefully carry the battle to the enemy. When the final measures to be taken were explained to the Earl of Albemarle, the English ambassador at Paris, he replied that "I must own that it requires a better head than mine to distinguish with proper nicety what we are now doing from hostile operations."²⁴ It is interesting to observe that the Duke's justification for his actions, that his enemy had broken the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle by making encroachments in America while the joint commission met in Paris, was identical to that made by the Court of Versailles. Furthermore, as an experienced military commander, Cumberland appreciated the importance of precise orders and objectives. He demanded that the ministry prepare these beforehand so that Braddock would be protected from possible future attacks from disgruntled civilians.²⁵

On 23 September, Robinson spoke with the King at Kensington and found George II an enthusiastic supporter of Cumberland's plan. The

King expressed his good opinion of Braddock and of Colonel Dunbar, who was to be the second in command.²⁶ Furthermore, "His Majesty is for sparing all sorts of arms, furniture, ammunition, artillery and engineers. He looks upon the whole as the highest national service. . . ." ²⁷ George II's support for his son's plan transformed it from proposal to policy. Robinson informed his chief of this and hoped "that all doubts, if there are any, will be removed at, or rather, before the meeting [of the Cabinet on 26 September]."²⁸ The overall English response to French actions in North America had been determined, but the timing and specific details of the operation were not yet fixed.

Lord Granville, the only member of the Cabinet whose experience and understanding of foreign affairs was greater than that of Newcastle, had studied American matters for years. When he first learned of the events at Great Meadows, and prior to the formulation of Cumberland's plan, he stated that:

. . . The affairs of North America . . . may still be put in a very good condition if proper measures are taken to be put in execution early next spring [and] the proper officers sent thither now, with arms and clothing and money to raise what recruits they can in the colonies this winter, which is the proper time of recruiting both here and there. When it is done, it will give great spirit to the colonies [and] forward the design of a general concert.²⁹

Because regular troops sent now would arrive too late to be effective this year, he contended that they should sail for America so as to arrive in early spring and thus take full advantage of the campaign season. In the meantime, the government should dispatch several officers immediately to raise colonial troops, prepare the way for arrival of the regulars and win the support of the Indians.³⁰

If this had been done, or even less than this, as the result of our meeting about this time twelve month [ago] at Mr. Pelham's, such expense [would] have been saved which now must be incurred. And Mr. Hanbury told us then . . . that it was then too late to anything of consequence that year except putting our colonies during the winter in a condition to act in the spring.³¹

On 9 October, the Cabinet adopted Granville's suggestion of enlisting Indian support and sending an advance party of officers to make preparations in the colonies, and Townshend's idea of raising local regiments.³²

By 29 September, Cumberland fully controlled the formulation and conduct of the war policy.³³ The combination of the Duke's ties with his father and his position as Captain General, coupled with Fox's position as Secretary at War and his rising influence in the Commons, posed a very serious threat to Newcastle both in the Closet and Parliament. Unfortunately, Cumberland lacked an appreciation of the subtleties and nuances of contemporary diplomacy. He fully understood them, but favored quicker, simpler and often military solutions. His distrust and hatred of France was legend and it clouded his thinking. He wanted to vindicate in the eyes of Europe his own reputation, and that of his beloved army, which he felt had been besmirched unfairly during the last war. Thus, he warmly pressed for a war with France in any shape or form. Henry Fox, furthermore, though an exceptionally able and ambitious man, had offended both Newcastle and Hardwicke in the past. He was not particularly adept at foreign affairs and in the present situation sought more to embarrass the ministry and further his own cause than to serve his nation.

The ministers were far more knowledgeable about foreign affairs than any of their opponents, and feared the disastrous diplomatic

repercussions which too vigorous measures in America might bring. Thus, they tried to lessen the scope and decrease the tempo of the projects pressed by the Cumberland-Fox coalition. Newcastle personally supported the sending of the two Irish regiments for operations in the Ohio and at Crown Point, but considered the early raising of the colonial troops and the attack upon the forts in Nova Scotia as unnecessary at this stage and thought they needlessly increased the cost of the entire expedition.³⁴

Throughout October, Newcastle fought a delaying action to contain the rapidly growing power of Cumberland and Fox, and to regain control of the formulation and conduct of policy. When the Duke virtually excluded the ministry from providing input into the making of war policy in late September, Newcastle countered by instructing Robinson not to issue necessary orders for several days.³⁵ The battle quickly spread to several fronts. Fox wanted to establish the colonial units as of September so that the officers could draw upon six months of their pay in advance to procure clothing and supplies for their troops.³⁶ Newcastle, as First Lord of the Treasury, wanted to keep expenses to a bare minimum and did not wish the establishment to begin until the first soldiers were recruited in the spring.³⁷ The coalition had already appointed a Quarter Master and a Deputy Commissary whom they wanted to send immediately to America to prepare for the arrival of the Irish regulars, the raising of the provincial units and the spring operations. The ministry desired to postpone the departure of these two officers until exact details and financial preparations had been completed in London.³⁸ To supplement the American expedition, the Duke ordered a draft of non-commissioned officers from the Guards.

When the King said that it had been done without his knowledge and cancelled the orders, Cumberland publicly stated that "somebody" [i.e., Newcastle] had turned the King against him.³⁹

The most blatant effort on the part of the coalition to force the government to press the expedition more energetically was the publication of a notice by Fox in the London Gazette.⁴⁰ In it the Secretary at War announced the four regiments concerned and listed the names of all the officers assigned to the colonial units. The notice took the ministry utterly by surprise and startled the courts of Europe.

Newcastle wrote Albemarle that:

A most ill-judged advertisement from the War Office has set all the foreign ministers on fire and made them believe that we are just going to war, which is I hope the furthest thing from our thoughts You know how much I was and am for it . . . but as I would have done it effectually, I would, as far as practicable, have avoided eclat.⁴¹

Albemarle, who had to deal directly with the French court, bemoaned the fact that, "By the nature of our constitution nothing is kept from the knowledge of the whole world, even intentions and thoughts are guessed at and made public by those abominable writers of daily papers."⁴²

The Lord Chancellor, while no less astonished, saw it clearly as a political move made by Cumberland and Fox.

I never was more surprised in my life than when I saw the advertisement in the Gazette, for if I remember right, it was agreed at the Kensington conference that everything should be done with as much secrecy and as little eclat as possible But I think there is an affectation in some Persons to make a parade with this affair, and a design to make use of it to let themselves again into business.⁴³

Military preparations on this scale could not be kept secret for long.

The marshalling of supplies, assembling of troops and procurement of transport vessels would have given strong indications of the English

plans. What bothered Hardwicke was the precipitation and methods with which Fox pushed the affair.⁴⁴

Newcastle did not easily accept his loss of influence and stature in this, the first ministry he had formed in which he was clearly recognized as First Minister. But when he continued to press for the separation of the operation in the Ohio Valley from those further north, Hardwicke reminded him of political reality:

For, as to the fond of the affair, the expedition itself, I mean as consisting of the several parts, I never apprehended that would be altered considering the great Person with whom it was concerned. I remember it was always so during the late war. Your brother [Henry Pelham] frequently threw in objections and struggled a little, but such was the opinion of that great Person, such was the King's, and that finally prevailed.⁴⁵

Sensing the weakness and lack of direction within the ministry, some of Newcastle's opponents asserted "the necessity of having a Minister or the Minister . . . in the House of Commons."⁴⁶ And though these attacks ruffled Newcastle's composure, the Lord Chancellor tempered his friend's peevishness by reminding him that, "You are the King's Minister, or he has no Minister."⁴⁷

By the end of October, having finally conceded that Cumberland and Fox were in control of military operations in America, Newcastle began to disavow their decisions. Describing to Horace Walpole how the government lost the policy initiative, he wrote, "As this would be entirely a military operation, we civil ministers were at a loss whom to recommend and what measures to take, especially knowing the difficulty and whatever we did would be disapproved by military men."⁴⁸ However, he did not mention to his friend that many of the ideas of Cumberland's plan had been made by friends of the ministry, and that

the Duke had edged out Newcastle by quickly determining the best features of the various proposals, combining them and presenting them to the King before the First Minister did. Newcastle went on to insist that:

. . . . the present scheme and the measures for conducting it and for the execution of it, are entirely His Royal Highness'. I have differed a little as to some preparatory steps which I thought might be more frugally and as effectually done another way---but as the Duke and the Secretary at War persisted in thinking otherwise I have in great measure acquiesced.⁴⁹

Even when fully in charge, Newcastle was reluctant to assume personal responsibility for major policy decisions. In this case, he sought to disassociate himself from the plan for colonial defense. He realized all too well that as head of the ministry he would be held responsible by the King, Parliament and the public for a policy he had not created.

Once the English response to French actions in North America had been determined, it never changed significantly through the time of its execution. The ministry now concentrated on justifying its colonial measures and strengthening England's position vis-à-vis France in Europe. On 14 November, George II opened Parliament with a carefully worded yet vigorous speech. The ministry had to show that it was taking strong, effective action against the French in America, while allaying the fears and suspicions of the courts of Europe that England was the aggressor in what promised to be an Anglo-French colonial war. The two houses were far less timid and unanimously voted their support of the King's measures to protect the rights and possessions of the Crown, the Commons specifically mentioning France as the aggressor and openly debating the conduct of the inevitable war.⁵⁰

Newcastle did not want to fight a war with France at this time. He favored limited operations in the Ohio Valley to restore English rights in that contested area, which would enable him to keep expenditures at a minimum, continue his plans to reduce the national debt and refrain from giving umbrage to France. All of Europe feared the possibility of an Anglo-French colonial war spreading to the continent where the large and powerful armies of France and her Prussian ally could strike at England through its allies in Flanders and Germany. To reduce the likelihood of such an occurrence, the immediate goals of English foreign policy were to strengthen Britain's alliances on the continent and stem the growth of French influence.

When word of Washington's defeat reached Paris in late August 1754, the French did not have to hastily form a new policy for America. Galissonnière's great plan was working well. The French considered English expeditions across the Alleghenies as illegal penetrations into French territory, and thought their victory at Great Meadows in July just recompense for the murder of one of their officers near the same place in May.⁵¹ According to the French, England was clearly the aggressor and the breaker of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. While carefully maintaining a passive role on the continent in order to deny Britain and its allies a casus foederis, France began a diplomatic offensive in Madrid to regain the influence lost with the fall of Ensenada. On 10 October, Louis XV sent a letter to his cousin Ferdinand VI warning that England was the constant enemy of Spain in the New World, that Austria could not be relied upon to safeguard Spanish interests in the Mediterranean and that France was the one true friend of the King of Spain.⁵²

The English acted vigorously in September and October because they felt that their position in Europe was strong enough to enable them to do so. Spanish neutrality seemed assured and though relations between London and the Hofburg over the Barrier were strained, Newcastle fully believed that he could convince Vienna to accept the Maritime Powers' position. The English ministry thought that the possibility of a continental war would not depend solely on the Anglo-French struggle in North America, and that the consolidation of friendly Anglo-Spanish relations would greatly discourage France from commencing hostilities.⁵³

Hardwicke and Newcastle wanted to limit the English response to French actions in America to only the Ohio Valley for two reasons. They felt that in this area Britain was clearly in the right and so could justify her actions to the courts of Europe as purely defensive, thus enabling her to marshal anti-French sentiment on the continent to force France to limit possible military escalation. Secondly, because France had held Crown Point and much of Acadia for over twenty-five years, Britain would have far more difficulty describing operations in these regions as local or defensive. This would increase the possibility that France might successfully brand England as the aggressor, strip Britain of its treaty allies and then take strong military measures in America and Europe. Although the ministers recognized "the danger there may be of France's taking it too strongly," they reluctantly agreed that some measure was necessary to defend the colonies, "but that must be ventured."⁵⁴

Throughout October and November diplomatic sparring continued between London and Versailles. France decided not to confront England

or its major allies directly, but chose instead to press its influence on peripheral states. Increased French diplomatic activity at Constantinople, assisted by stubborn Russian insistence upon its fort on the Ingol River, helped move Turkey towards the French camp, where she served as a check against Austria and Russia. French influence in Denmark grew, thanks in part to pressure applied by Sweden and Prussia.⁵⁵ And in hopes of preventing the renewal of the Bavarian and Saxon subsidy treaties with England, France began negotiations with ministers in Munich and Dresden to replace British subsidies with French ones.

London, in the meantime, was not inactive. England joined with Austria, the Republic and Saxony in an attempt to persuade St. Petersburg to moderate its behavior towards Turkey, and to decrease French and Prussian influence at the Sublime Porte.⁵⁶ The ministry was certain that Austria would not completely reject the terms of the latest proposed commercial treaty, and had convinced the Dutch of this as well, despite reports that the Court of Vienna remained very cool on the subject.

Newcastle was particularly happy about affairs in Spain. With the disgrace and fall of Ensenada, he wrote, "things are certainly vastly mended, and verily I believe that there is an end (for the present, at least) of French councils and French influence and that, I hope, will tend to discourage France from any inclination to war, so that no ill-consequences will happen from our necessary measures of vigor in North America."⁵⁷ The King of Spain's response to the October letter from Louis XV was non-committal.⁵⁸ In fact, King Ferdinand and Queen Barbara did not read the memorial enclosed with the letter before turning it over to General Wall.⁵⁹

The vulnerability of the Low Countries and the obstinacy of Vienna were the weak points of the System. "If that were otherwise," wrote Joseph Yorke, the English minister to The Hague and son of the Lord Chancellor, "I should hope we had little to apprehend from France alone in America."⁶⁰ Furthermore, the ministry relied upon France's severe domestic problems and the well-known pacific tendencies of Louis XV and the Marquise de Pompadour to keep the French at peace.

Unlike France, when the English government first received word of George Washington's defeat, it immediately resolved to use force against its enemy in North America.

All North America will be lost if these practices are tolerated, and no war can be worse to this country than the suffering [of] such insults as these. The truth is the French claim almost all North America except a lisiere to the sea, to which they would confine all our colonies and from whence they may drive us whenever they please or as soon as there shall be a declared war. But that is what we must not, we will not suffer.⁶¹

George II was not fooled by French promises of peaceful orders to be sent to their governors or by commissions established to negotiate boundary differences. He had only to look to India, Acadia and the Neutral Islands to see how useless these were. Robinson assured Albemarle that the King would not "suffer himself to be amused by negotiation, or by referring pretensions which have no foundations to commissairies, while the French are in possession of countries belonging to the Crown of Great Britain and are acting hostilely in the manner which they are now doing in North America. . . ."⁶² Newcastle, too, doubted the efficacy of these bodies: "I own I am quite sick of Commissaries, tho' I don't well know how to get rid of them. I am sure they will do no good, and therefore hope, we shall not . . . suspend or delay

taking the proper measures to defend ourselves or recover lost possessions."⁶³ London insisted that it would not begin serious negotiations with Paris until France evacuated the Neutral Islands, withdrew its forces from the Ohio, and relinquished its forts in Acadia, thus executing the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.⁶⁴

Once it had made the decision to send the Braddock expedition to America, the ministry realized that in order to avoid England being called the aggressor in North America it must lay the blame squarely on France. Despite the fact that the French had encroached upon British lands from the Ohio to Nova Scotia, Newcastle complained that "if we endeavour to defend ourselves, prevent their further progress or endeavour to reinstate ourselves in our possessions, we then begin the war---but whoever begins it, it will be the greatest misfortune to the country. . . .We are on a precipice."⁶⁵ The ministers argued that Versailles was clearly the aggressor because in recent years it had constructed forts in the disputed regions of the Ohio and Nova Scotia and had sent annual shipments of troops and warlike stores to bolster its forces in the New World. This "unwarrantable conduct forced us (*malgré nous*) to act in the same manner to defend His Majesty's possessions and the undoubted rights of his subjects in his colonies now attacked by the French troops . . ."⁶⁶ This justification of the decision to raise four thousand troops for service in the colonies was warmly approved by the King and favorably received in Spain and the United Provinces.⁶⁷

By late November 1754, preparations for the American expedition were progressing smoothly, Spain had rejected Louis XV's appeal to revitalize the Family Compact, and intelligence reports indicated that

"France has not taken one step, or said one word, which denotes the least intention of breaking the peace."⁶⁸ However, in December and January the situation changed dramatically. Austria unequivocally rejected the Commercial Treaty proposed by the Maritime Powers, Louis XV decided to send a large body of regular troops to reinforce New France and the Spanish forcibly evicted English settlers from Honduras.

On 30 September 1754 Robert Keith, the British minister at Vienna, had presented the Anglo-Dutch project for a new commercial treaty, which Newcastle had prepared in August. In the following weeks, Keith reminded the Austrian Chancellor, Count Kaunitz, that "the very existence of our whole System" depended upon the acceptance of the treaty "in the manner proposed by the Maritime Powers."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, on 14 November the Austrians flatly rejected the project. The Dutch and English ministers promptly submitted alternative positions, but Maria Theresa declined to accept them because they were much the same as an earlier Anglo-Dutch convention which she had rejected that summer. At once the representatives of the Maritime Powers terminated the negotiations and presented Kaunitz with their governments' demands that Article 26 be evoked and the new high tariffs abrogated. The Dutch went on to insist upon payment of the arrears due them under the Barrier Treaty.⁷⁰ Later in private, Keith stressed to Kaunitz that if the Commercial Treaty and arrears to Holland were not settled, the Dutch might choose neutrality as they had in the last war. This would destroy the System and probably prevent England from rendering any future assistance to her continental allies. The Austrian court responded coolly to this thinly veiled threat and did not alter its position.⁷¹

The receipt of this bad news caused alarm and dismay at The Hague and in London. In the United Provinces Yorke reported that "the consternation can not be greater, and every well-intentioned person in this government is incapacitated from serving the House of Austria hereafter."⁷² The Dutch ministers knew that without Austrian participation there would be no Barrier System, and that without this the Republic would have no security. Pensionary Stein remarked that "it would be very difficult to prevent this country from breaking forever with the House of Austria, and looking for another system, talem qualem with other powers."⁷³ Furthermore, the past efforts of the States General to restore the Barrier had given umbrage to France and Prussia, and if continued, might provide those courts with an excuse to take military reprisals in the Low Countries or against the United Provinces themselves. The English representative feared that the Dutch might withdraw their troops from all the Barrier fortresses save Namur and reduce their armed forces.⁷⁴

Newcastle was shaken. He had not thought Austria would reject so out of hand the Anglo-Dutch proposal and alternatives. His immediate concern was that the Alliance might break up, at a time when there was a distinct possibility that England and France might be at war within six months.

It is however to little purpose to look into the causes [of the Austrian rejection]---we must now only think, if possible, of the remedies. I see the great System on the point of being dissolved. The court of Vienna is driving the Republic, and with her this country, from them as fast as they can. The moment the Barrier Treaty is out of the question, Holland will and must seek for protection from France or Prussia. And by what I hear from Holland, if the court of Vienna persists in their last answer, all further negotiation about the Barrier is at an end.⁷⁵

Perhaps if Newcastle troubled "to look into the causes," he might have found new and effective remedies. Unfortunately, he did not. Instead he proposed to make yet another joint attempt to persuade Maria Theresa to accept the Commercial Treaty as it was, or possibly offer a compromise short-term settlement in order to keep negotiations going and the System intact. He specifically urged the Dutch to maintain their troops in the Barrier towns, warning them that "if you withdraw them, the System founded upon the Grand Alliance is at an end."⁷⁶

The Princess Royal declared "the absolute impossibility of the Republic's going on in the System with the House of Austria without some security of a Barrier and without some subsidy for repairing and protecting that Barrier."⁷⁷ She indicated that it was improbable that such a Barrier could be agreed upon by first treating upon commercial issues, and pointed out the imminent danger of waiting for such a plan to be adjusted.⁷⁸ Since the United Provinces themselves had neither viable alternatives to Newcastle's proposals nor means to independently pressure Austria to come to terms over the Barrier, the Dutch ministers accepted the English lead in the negotiations. To eliminate delay, they offered to forego all consultation and communication between the courts on this matter.⁷⁹ The Pensionary promised that he would keep the States General from discussing the rejection of the Commercial Treaty until mid-January, in order to give Newcastle as much time as possible to bring Vienna back into the System.⁸⁰

As serious as the implications of Austria's disavowal of the Barrier Treaty were, England did not postpone or delay Braddock's expedition or alter her policy. In early January the ministry learned that the French were spending five million livres to send a body of three thousand

regular troops under escort of a large squadron of warships to reinforce their garrisons in New France.⁸¹ If the English expedition to America was cancelled, Versailles could consolidate its newly acquired superior strategic position in North America. France, however, would not be able to assemble the men, ships and material required for several months, whereas the English force could set sail in a few days and perhaps achieve all of its objectives before the French reinforcements arrived and made their presence felt. The English ministry did not change its mind, and on 15 January 1755, General Braddock and his men sailed to execute the plan approved by the Cabinet on 9 October.

The action by the Court of Vienna startled George II and his ministers. Austrian withdrawal from the Barrier System would shatter the basis of the King's foreign policy. There would be neither an allied army in the Pays Bas to protect the Austrian Netherlands, the United Provinces and the King's German provinces, nor a deterrent to check the spread of French influence and prevent France from bringing a colonial war to the continent with near impunity. With its position in Europe so insecure, England could not afford to pursue an aggressive policy against France in North America.

The only major foreign policy success the English had won since 1748 was the rapprochement with Spain. Yet even after the dismissal of Ensenada and the poor reception of Louis XV's letter and its attached memorial, France never ceased to attempt to renew the Pacte de Famille. The French ambassador received instructions that if Madrid favored such a project, he was to offer French assistance in driving the English from all Spanish possessions in America and in attacking Jamaica, in hopes of forcing Britain to give up its possessions in the Mediterranean.⁸²

Toward the end of January 1755, word reached London that the Spanish governor of Guatemala, acting under Ensenada's previous orders, had forcibly evicted English logwood cutters from their settlements in Honduras. This embarrassed Newcastle and the ministry for they had stressed the friendly relationship with Spain at the opening of Parliament. Newcastle feared his opponents would see the similarities between Spain's expulsion without notice and by force of English settlers from their homes in Honduras, and French actions in Acadia and on the Ohio, and exploit the ministry's inconsistent handling of the situation. While Newcastle had rushed to begin hostilities with France over an inconsequential wilderness tract in America, he acted with great moderation towards England's traditional colonial enemy in an area of vital economic importance.⁸³

Thus, when Mirepoix arrived in London on 14 January, both England and France earnestly desired to arrive at a negotiated settlement in North America. Versailles was unwilling and unprepared to fight any war, particularly a colonial one against England. When the nation was experiencing serious financial and social problems, the French council considered it madness to plunge into what promised to be a very expensive and probably unsuccessful endeavor to protect one of the least profitable French colonies. From September through November, England had felt strong enough in Europe to take a firm stand against France in the New World and the ministry adopted an aggressive policy reflecting this attitude. But when the events of December and January threw English foreign policy into disarray, that tough attitude towards the French in America quickly changed. London was disinclined to risk fighting a colonial war with France with the diplomatic situation on

the continent so unsettled. Even at the commencement of the Great War for Empire, events at The Hague, Madrid, Paris and Vienna dominated English foreign policy, and not those in the New World.

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ENDNOTES

¹British Library Additional Manuscript (London: British Library Microform Service) [hereafter referred to as B.L. Add. MS.] 32995, ff. 270-74, Heads of Papers to be Considered by the Privy Council [undated, but most likely read at an Inner Cabinet Meeting on 13 June 1754 at Newcastle House]; British Museum Additional Manuscript [hereafter referred to as B.M. Add. MS.], f. 124, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 26 June 1754, extract cited in Theodore Calvin Pease, ed., Anglo-French Boundary Disputes in the West 1749-1763, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, vol. 27 (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1936) [hereafter referred to as 'Pease'], p. 48.

²B.L. Add. MS. 32995, f. 267, Cabinet Minutes, Newcastle House, 13 June 1754; B.L. Add. MS. 32736, ff. 243-52, Dunk Halifax to Newcastle, Horton, 15 August 1754.

³B.L. Add. MS. 32735, f. 597, Newcastle to Horatio Walpole, Claremont, 29 June 1754, also in Pease, pp. 48-49.

⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32736, f. 433, Newcastle to Granville, Newcastle House, 5 September 1754.

⁵Ibid., f. 437, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Wimpole, 7 September 1754, Saturday Morning.

⁶Ibid., ff. 438-39, Murray to Newcastle, Bath, 7 September 1754.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., ff. 472-73, Newcastle to Murray, Newcastle House, 10 September 1754.

⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32995, f. 319, Points of Consideration with the Lord Chancellor, Newcastle House, 11 September 1754.

¹⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32995, f. 310, Conference with the Speaker [of the House of Commons], Claremont, 9 September 1754.

¹¹B.L. Add. MS. 32736, f. 473, Newcastle to Murray, Newcastle House, 10 September 1754. Newcastle often used the ploy of postponing critical decisions, either to gain time to more fully consider the matter, gather more information or simply to delay action until the passage of time had eliminated some of his options or had made circumstances more favorable to a course of action he supported.

¹² B.L. Add. MS. 32736, ff. 515-18, A Scheme for the Improvement and Employment of His Majesty's Forces in America. Enclosed in *ibid.*, ff. 508-9, Townshend to Newcastle, London, 13 September 1754.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ff. 508-9, Townshend to Newcastle, London, 13 September 1754.

¹⁴ For a more detailed and fuller discussion of Cumberland's role after Aix-la-Chapelle see Evan Edward Charteris, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, and the Seven Years' War (London: Hutchinson, 1925) [hereafter referred to as Cumberland and the Seven Years' War].

¹⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32736, f. 529, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 15 September 1754.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 530.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 529.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 554, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 21 September 1754.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 554-55. Hardwicke and Cumberland also opposed sending the Highland Regiment. *Ibid.*, f. 650, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Wimpole, 22 September 1754.

²¹ *Ibid.*, f. 554.

²² *Ibid.*, f. 563, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 22 September 1754.

²³ *Ibid.*, f. 564.

²⁴ B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f. 83, Albemarle to Newcastle, Fontainebleau, 23 October 1754, Private.

²⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32736, f. 569, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 22 September 1754. Charteris misinterprets Cumberland's insistence in September for precise military limits in North America as the impetus for the English demand for linear not geographic boundaries in February. Charteris, Cumberland and the Seven Years War, p. 128.

²⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32736, ff. 569-70, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 23 September 1754. Dunbar's regiment had already been chosen as one of the two Irish units to go to America.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 569.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, ff. 567, Granville to Newcastle, Hawnes [no date, but received 23 September 1754].

³⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 568.

³¹ Ibid.

³² B.L. Add. MS. 32995, ff. 328-29, Cabinet Minutes, Whitehall, 9 October 1754; Pitt and Anson had been early supporters of Granville's plan. B. L. Add. MS. 32737, ff. 24-26, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Newcastle House, 2 October 1754.

³³ On that day Fox informed Newcastle that Cumberland had determined to raise Shirley's and Pepperell's regiments, and had given orders reference appointing officers, providing clothing, armaments and the like, and that Fox would tell Newcastle when these measures were ready to be executed and placed before the King. B.L. Add. MS. 32736, f. 604, Fox to Newcastle, Holland House, 29 September 1754, Sunday. Also on 29 September, Col. Napier delivered two letters to Sir Thomas Robinson, informing the Secretary of State that he, like Newcastle, had been effectively squeezed out of the decision making process insofar as war policy was concerned. If Robinson had any questions to ask Cumberland about the expedition, he was instructed to use Napier as a go-between, and the Colonel would "let him know what steps are taken or what orders given in relation to it." Library of Congress, Washington. Transcripts from the Additional Manuscript Series in the British Museum, London [hereafter referred to as L.C. Add. MS.] 33046, ff. 297-99, Colonel Napier to Robinson, 29 September 1754.

³⁴ "I was always for separating the two expeditions, that which is to go at present to Virginia for the operations on the Ohio, and the more distant one for the attempt to be made next spring or next summer on the forts and settlements of the French on the River St. John." B.L. Add. MS. 32737, f. 107, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 12 October 1754.

³⁵ Ibid., ff. 24-26, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Newcastle House, 2 October 1754.

³⁶ Ibid., ff. 53-54, Fox to Newcastle, Holland House, 6 October 1754, Sunday.

³⁷ Ibid., f. 104, Lincoln Inn Fields, 11 October 1754; *ibid.*, ff. 108-9, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 12 October 1754.

³⁸ Ibid., f. 105, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 11 October 1754.

³⁹ Ibid., f. 106; *ibid.*, f. 108, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 12 October 1754.

⁴⁰ Gazette (London) Saturday October 5 to Tuesday October 8, 1754 (New York: New York Library Microfilm reproduction, 1950), reel 13, no. 9413.

⁴¹ B.L. Add. MS. 32851, ff. 56-57, Newcastle to Albemarle, Newcastle House, 10 October 1754, Private.

⁴² Ibid., f. 82, Albemarle to Newcastle, Fontainebleau, 23 October 1754, Private.

⁴³ B.L. Add. MS. 32737, f. 147, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Wimpole, 13 October 1754.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., f. 147, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Wimpole, 13 October 1754.

⁴⁶ Ibid., f. 163, Newcastle to Argyll, Claremont, 19 October 1754.

⁴⁷ Ibid., f. 199, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 26 October 1754, at night.

⁴⁸ Ibid., f. 208, Newcastle to Walpole, Claremont, 26 October 1754.

⁴⁹ Ibid., f. 208.

⁵⁰ William Cobbett and J. Wright, eds., The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803, vol. 15: AD 1753-1765 (London: T. C. Hansard, 1813), pp. 332, 373.

⁵¹ The Frenchman, Jumonville, and all but one of his party were either killed or captured in a confrontation with an English force under George Washington on 28 May 1754. France insisted that they were assassinated while under a flag of France, while Britain claimed that they were skirmishers.

⁵² Lettre du Roi de France au Roi d'Espagne, 1^{er} Octobre 1754, with an attached memorial, transcribed in Camille Rousset, Correspondance de Louis XV et du Maréchal de Noailles (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1865), pp. 339-71.

⁵³ B.L. Add. MS. 32737, f. 28, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Wimpole, 3 October 1754.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f. 209, Newcastle to Walpole, Claremont, 26 October 1754.

⁵⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f. 143, Titley to Holdernes, Copenhagen, 8 October 1754, In Cipher.

⁵⁶ Ibid., ff. 6-10, Keith to Holdernes, Vienna, 2 October 1754, Separate and Secret, In Cipher; *ibid.*, f. 60, Robinson to Albemarle, Whitehall, 10 October 1754.

⁵⁷ B.L. Add. MS. 32737, f. 209, Newcastle to Walpole, Claremont, 26 October 1754.

⁵⁸ Lettre (traduite) du Roi d'Espagne au Roi de France, 27 November 1754, Rousset, Correspondance de Louis XV et du Maréchal de Noailles, pp. 371-75.

⁵⁹ B.L. Add. MS. 32851, ff. 110-12, Keene to Robinson, Escorial, 25 October 1754, Secret.

⁶⁰ Ibid., f. 149, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 5 November 1754, No. 2.

⁶¹ B.L. Add. MS. 32850, ff. 218-19, Newcastle to Albemarle, Newcastle House, 5 September 1754, Private, also in Pease, p. 51.

⁶² B.M. Add. MS. 32850, f. 301, Robinson to Albemarle, Whitehall, 12 September 1754, extract in British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689-1789, 7 vols. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1934), vol. 7: France, Part IV, 1745-1789, edited by Leopold George Wickham Legg [hereafter referred to as Legg], p. 48.

⁶³ Ibid., f. 220, extract in Pease, p. 52.

⁶⁴ Ibid., extract in Legg, p. 47.

⁶⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f. 58, Newcastle to Albemarle, Newcastle House, 10 October 1754, Private.

⁶⁶ Ibid., f. 83, Albemarle to Newcastle, Fontainebleau, 23 October 1754, Private.

⁶⁷ Ibid., f. 86, Robinson to Albemarle, Whitehall, 24 October 1754.

⁶⁸ Ibid., f. 218, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 26 November 1754.

⁶⁹ Ibid., f. 49, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 9 October 1754.

⁷⁰ Ibid., ff. 195-201, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 21 November 1754.

⁷¹ Ibid., ff. 208-9, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 21 November 1754, Private.

⁷² Ibid., f. 277, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 29 November 1754, Private.

⁷³ Ibid., f. 296, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 6 December 1754, Private.

⁷⁴ Ibid., f. 293, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 6 December 1754; ibid., f. 297, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 6 December 1754, Private.

⁷⁵ Ibid., ff. 326-27, Newcastle to Bentinck, Newcastle House, 17 December 1754.

⁷⁶ Ibid., f. 328.

⁷⁷ Ibid., f. 346, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 24 December 1754, "Barrier."

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., ff. 378-79, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 31 December 1754, Private, No. 1.

⁸⁰Ibid., f. 381, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 31 December 1754, Private, No. 2.

⁸¹L.C. Add. MS. 32852, f. 156, Memoranda for the King, 13 January 1755. Richard Waddington in Louis XV et le Renversement des Alliances: Préliminaires de la Guerre de Sept Ans 1754-1756 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1896) [hereafter referred to as Louis XV], p. 64, states that the French king decided to send the force to America on 3 January 1755, but he gives no source for his information. Patrice Louis-René Higonnet in "The Origins of the Seven Years' War," Journal of Modern History 40 (March 1968):81, places the date on 6 December 1754, and cites a letter from Machault to Hocquart in the Archives National at Paris, B 347, as proof.

⁸²B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f. 321, Keene to Robinson, Madrid, 14 December 1754, Separate and Secret. The parts of the French plan referring to America reflect many of the ideas of a memoir written by Noailles in April 1754. Library of Congress, Washington, Transcripts from the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, Mémoires et Documents [hereafter referred to as L.C. Mems. et Docs].

⁸³Ibid., f. 275, Newcastle to Keene, Newcastle House, 27 January 1755, Very Private.

CHAPTER III

JANUARY TO APRIL 1755

The negotiations between England and France which began in January 1755 in London were the first direct court-to-court talks held by the two nations specifically on the problems in North America since Aix-la-Chapelle. This is not to say that there had been no communication between London and Versailles over these issues from 1748 to 1754. The regular diplomatic channels had remained open. Ambassadors Albemarle and Mirepoix acted as the principal agents and spokesmen for their governments on all matters of state, as well as fulfilling many semi-official and unofficial functions. There were on-going low-level attempts by England and France to resolve their differences in India and in America. These had achieved very little success due primarily to the lack of interest displayed by both courts. The situation in North America in January 1755 was far more crucial and required the talks to be raised to the direct ministerial level.

The Anglo-French conversations on India endeavored to end the undeclared war between the two rival East India Companies for control of the lucrative Carnatic trade. Technically the talks begun in London in May 1753 were only between the representatives of the Directors of the two companies, but ministers of both governments actively participated.¹ To protect John Company commerce, which was three times the

size of its French counterpart and extremely vulnerable to a guerre de course in the Indian Ocean, the English cabinet in January 1754 sent a fleet with troop reinforcements to strengthen England's position on the sub-continent. Though the companies agreed to the idea of an armistice, preceding a peace to be drafted by commissioners in India, the negotiations stalled over domestic Indian political and territorial issues and dragged on into 1756.²

The other set of negotiations in progress between England and France in January 1755 were those required by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Article Nine stipulated that a commission meet to resolve problems arising from any hostile actions which might occur after the signing of the peace, and to re-establish the pre-war status quo in Europe and overseas. Article Eighteen directed that this commission amicably adjust any points not specifically addressed in the body of the treaty.³ Early in 1749, English, French and Dutch commissioners met unsuccessfully at St. Malo to settle problems dealing with prizes and prisoners of war taken during the war. Differing interpretations of what constituted the status quo ante bellum led to new hostilities between the English and the French in Acadia and the four Neutral Islands of Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Tobago. In July 1749, Britain and France agreed to replace the St. Malo group with another commission which would settle boundary disputes in North America, as called for in Article Nine of the Treaty, as well as the issues of prisoners and prizes.

Appointed in early 1750, the commissioners finally met in Paris in late August.⁴ From the outset the two sides were at odds. The instructions which they received from their governments, and under which they were to operate, differed significantly. The negotiations began in a mood of distrust and skepticism. In January 1751, the English presented

a memorial, drafted by the Board of Trade, stating that the "ancienne limits" of Acadia, which had been ceded to England at Utrecht and confirmed by Aix-la-Chapelle, consisted of all the lands between the St. Lawrence River and New England, including the entire peninsula of Nova Scotia. The French reply, which was not delivered until October, refuted the British argument, claiming that Acadia consisted only of the southeastern portion of the peninsula. Conflicting English and French memorials in 1751 on the possession of the Neutral Islands led to a similar impasse.⁵

The commission accomplished little beyond publishing these initial memorials. The English proposed, as early as the fall of 1751, in the spring of 1752, and again in 1753 that the question of the North American boundary be negotiated directly through regular diplomatic channels, but the French refused.⁶ The year 1752 was spent squabbling over whether the British could submit their memorials in English. The English ministry wanted to withdraw from these fruitless negotiations but feared that such an act would not be received well at home or abroad. It considered that France was using the talks to gain time to strengthen her military and diplomatic posture in North America at England's expense.⁷ As the tension grew in the course of 1754, the two courts finally agreed to begin direct negotiations. France nevertheless insisted that the commission continue to meet in Paris to parallel the work of the regularly appointed ambassadors. Technically, the commission remained in existence until the rupture between the two states, the French submitting a memorial on Tobago as late as 18 July 1755.⁸ Versailles and London realized, however, that its effectiveness had ended in 1751 and placed their hopes for a peaceful settlement of North American boundaries in the court-to-court negotiations.

In the autumn of 1754, Paris was the center of Anglo-French diplomacy. Mirepoix had returned to Paris in June to recover his health, having received no response from the English ministers when he mentioned that French forces had won a skirmish against the British in the Ohio valley in April.⁹ From then until his return to London six months later, Mirepoix did not play a significant diplomatic role, as he intentionally avoided Albemarle while trying to secure a position which he considered more suitable to his birth and rank.¹⁰ Consequently, the only important channel of communication remaining open between the two courts was between the English ambassador and the newly appointed Foreign Minister, Antoine Louis de Rouillé. The latter was a timid, elderly man who was greatly influenced by his hardlined subordinate, the Abbe de la Ville.¹¹ Throughout the fall the French insisted that their actions in America were defensive. Rouillé considered Braddock's expedition excessive for purely defensive operations, and repeatedly hinted that France felt compelled to send a large body of men to America to protect her territories from the English reinforcements.¹² Mirepoix was to return to London before the New Year, but the sudden death of Albemarle on 22 December delayed his departure for several weeks.

Neither England nor France approached the new talks with an intention of making meaningful compromises. Each possessed strongly held claims which she considered non-negotiable in the contested areas: Nova Scotia, Canada, the Ohio Valley and the Neutral Islands. While both nations recognized the usefulness of an armistice in preventing hostilities and a rupture, they entered the negotiations with distinctly different expectations. England wished to employ her local naval and military superiority to force France to agree to British terms and to

achieve a comprehensive settlement of all colonial boundary disputes before signing an armistice. France desired to implement an immediate armistice and to limit preliminary talks to the prevention of hostilities in the Ohio Valley, the area of the greatest present concern. This would enable the French to send reinforcements to Canada without fear of British interference and to regain military preponderance in America, before the commencement of talks designed to achieve an overall boundary agreement.

The actual process of negotiation began on 15 January 1755 when the Duc de Mirepoix met Sir Thomas Robinson in London. The Secretary of State lectured the ambassador at length on the superiority of the English claim to the Ohio Valley. France, he stated, had never claimed the upper Ohio and had rarely used it as a line of communication between Canada and Louisiana, preferring the Wabash River or a land route further to the west. England based its title upon the Treaty of Utrecht. The Iroquois, Britain's allies and subjects as described in Article Fifteen of that document, had conquered the region and subsequently sold it to England. George II acted within his rights when he granted some of these lands to a private company, and the members of that company and the colonial governors were perfectly justified in sending troops to protect their settlements there or to repel an armed invasion.¹³ The French Ambassador gave no specific reply to these claims, but chastized the English for sending an armed force into disputed territory rather than referring the question to the commission at Paris as established in Article Eighteen of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

[illegible]

----- Height-of-Land Line originally proposed by France
(after the d'Aubry line of 1720)

Territory originally claimed by France in the area of Acadia, along the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes waterway, and in the Ohio Valley

Acadia and the environs of Annapolis Royal (Port Royal) as defined by the French

Proposed neutral zone between the height-of-land and the Ohio River

Map reproduced from Savelle,
Origins of American Diplomacy,
p. 396.

Mirepoix then presented Versailles' three-part proposal for prompt reconciliation of the immediate Anglo-French differences in North America. Before any of the issues were examined in detail, the two courts should send orders to all colonial governors and commanders to cease hostilities. The Ohio Valley then should be restored to the state it had been "or should have been" before the war, and the dispute referred to the commission in Paris. In addition, in order to dispel any uneasiness or distrust, Louis XV wanted George II to explain openly the destination and purposes of the recent British armaments.¹⁴

Mirepoix informed the French council that London was unlikely to accept these terms without some modification. England might consent to the neutralization of the region until the dispute was settled, but only if all recent French settlements on the Ohio were evacuated before the armistice. Britain would absolutely refuse to refer the affair to the commission in Paris, preferring to treat the matter court-to-court either through Mirepoix in London or by Albemarle's replacement in Paris.¹⁵

The day after Mirepoix presented his proposals, the English cabinet met to consider them. The key to the British position was the ministry's desire to restore the possessions in North America on both sides to the state they were actually in at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht, and according to the Cessations and Stipulations made by that Treaty.¹⁶ This applied not only to the Ohio Valley, but to the Great Lakes and Acadia as well, and meant the demolition of the French forts in these areas built since 1713, including Crown Point, the forts on the the Niagara River, and those inspired by La Galissionière's plan. The cabinet maintained that Braddock had been sent only to protect and

defend English rights and possessions, and wanted to know why France was assembling a naval force in Brest and Toulon.¹⁷ Robinson's official reply to Mirepoix of 22 January reflected these sentiments.¹⁸

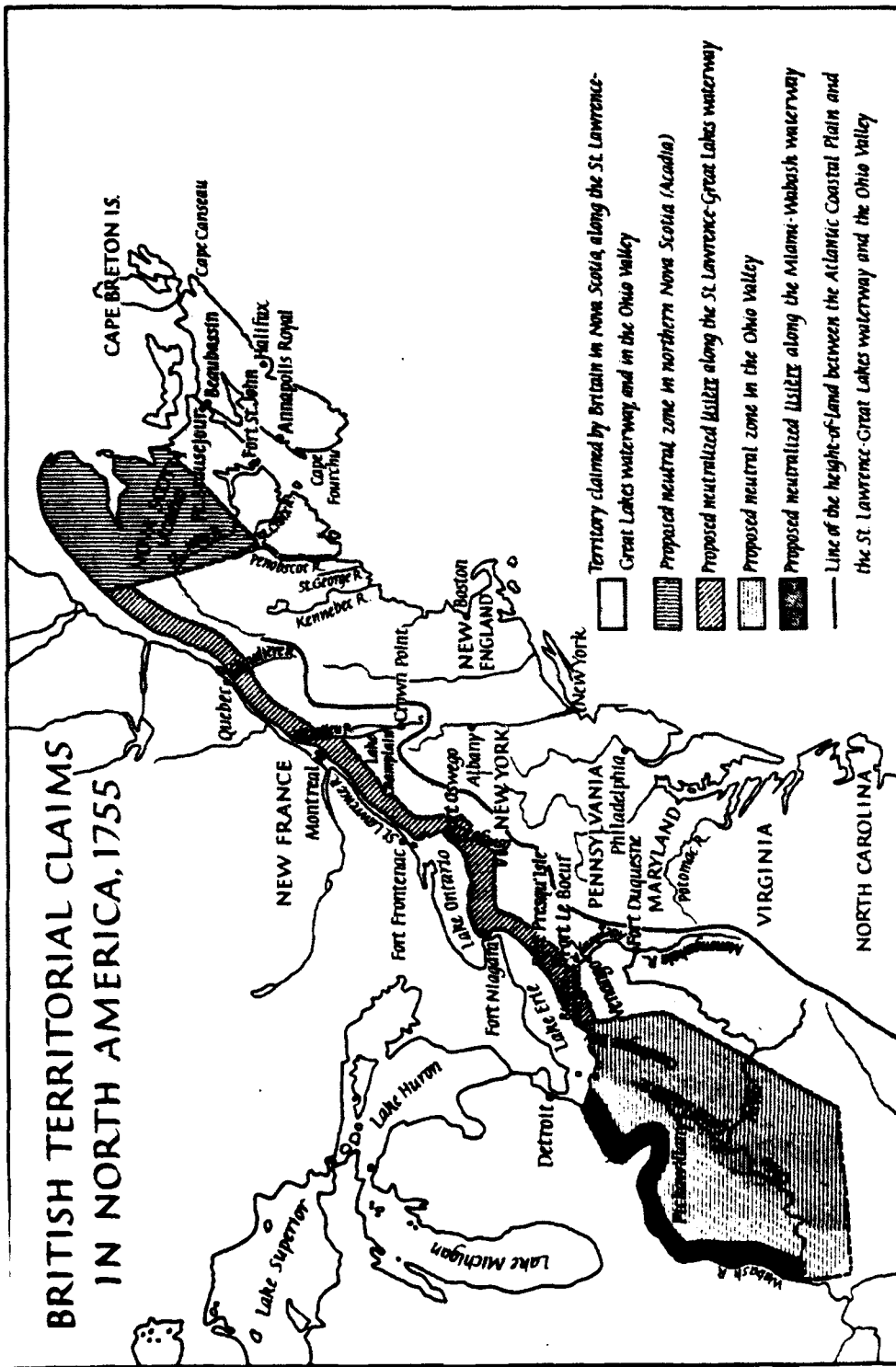
On 6 February, the French ambassador relayed his court's response to Robinson's memoir. France claimed the Ohio Valley since its discovery in 1679 by La Salle. England had never contested this. Furthermore, because the Ohio was not mentioned in the terms of either Utrecht or Aix-la-Chapelle, any British attempt to invoke those treaties in support of their claims was invalid. The French again submitted their proposals for a foundation of the negotiation: an armistice; the restoration of all areas in dispute "to the same state in which they were or should have been before the last war" in conformity with Article Nine of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and, the referral of England's territorial claims and their bases to the commission at Paris. The French council stated that the rapid augmentation of the English armed forces had prompted France to take similar measures, but only for defensive purposes.¹⁹

The two courts spent the first few weeks sounding out each others' positions. When Mirepoix in early February received full powers to negotiate, both parties went straight to work. Within four days the English cabinet and the French ambassador reached a tentative plan which could serve as an acceptable basis for compromise.²⁰ The proposal called for the evacuation and neutralization of the entire Ohio Valley, from the Allegheny mountains to Lakes Erie and Ontario, and on to the Wabash River. All forts within the region would have to be demolished, and access limited only to traders and those travelling in a peaceful manner. The English also demanded free passage of the Great Lakes area,

the destruction of Crown Point and all forts west of the Niagara River, and the entire peninsula of Nova Scotia with a lisière from New England to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Once England and France agreed upon these conditions the armistice would go into effect and final negotiations could begin.²¹

This was the closest the two nations came to settling their rival claims through negotiation. The Inner Cabinet approved these terms on 10 February. When Robinson showed them to Cumberland the next day, the warlike Duke cautiously remarked, "If France consents to the Paper marked Points I shall think we have got very well out of our present difficulties and indeed there is some appearance of it . . ."²² Although Mirepoix and the English ministers favored these measures, resistance quickly formed in both countries and forced the governments to assume tougher stances.

In England the Earl of Halifax, a strong advocate of a vigorous colonial policy, led the opposition. He had not taken part in the cabinet decisions of 7, 9, and 10 February, and when asked his opinion on the tentative English proposals, made a number of suggestions which significantly altered the British position. He utterly disapproved of the Allegheny Mountains serving as a boundary. Recognition of them as the western limit of the English colonies would require giving up large portions of Pennsylvania and New York, and Halifax questioned the legality of the Crown forfeiting property which it previously had given or granted to private individuals and corporations. Moreover, England would be yielding her right to build forts and settlements in the Iroquois land south of the Great Lakes, while allowing France to do so on the northern shores. This would lead to French dominance of both



Map reproduced from Savelle,
Origins of American Diplomacy,
p. 397.

the Indians and their trade in the region. Halifax insisted upon the demolition of the strategic forts at Crown Point and the Niagara River, and stated that any concessions made by the English in Acadia must be equalled by France in other parts of North America.²³

Robinson altered his Paper of Points to resolve some of the issues Halifax addressed and included boundaries by lines where clear geographic features did not exist.²⁴ On 20 February, the cabinet adopted a firmer stance on the colonial negotiations based on Robinson's revised paper. Arbitrary lines replaced natural boundaries. In the Ohio, France was restricted to the territory west of the Wabash, while England received the lands at the head waters of the Ohio, including all of the French forts built in the region. The area between the lines would be neutral and unsettled, open only for the purpose of trading with the Indians. Crown Point and the forts on the Niagara River must be destroyed and both nations allowed free access to traffic with the natives throughout the Great Lakes region. In Nova Scotia, England insisted upon possession of the entire peninsula, a lisière from New England to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the demolition of the French forts on the St. John River and on the Chignecto Isthmus.²⁵ This cabinet resolution formed the foundation of English territorial demands in North America during the remainder of the negotiations.

The French ministry rejected the terms worked out by Robinson and Mirepoix, which the French ambassador had sent to Paris on 10 February. Rouillé drew up a project for a preliminary convention based on Mirepoix's reports that England accepted the mountains as their western border and the status quo as per the Treaty of Utrecht. France reaffirmed that their eastern boundary was the Alleghenies but would withdraw to the

Ohio for the sake of peace. The neutral area between the River and the mountains would be closed to both English and French traders, who, if permitted access even for commercial purposes, would naturally build stockades at trading settlements to protect themselves and their property. These strong houses might then be employed easily for military purposes. France was willing to destroy its forts in the Ohio Valley only if England demolished those at Oswego and in Acadia.²⁶

The French court wanted to limit the negotiations to the solution of the Ohio problem, to be followed by a two-year armistice during which the two courts would complete the details of a comprehensive settlement in North America. Rouillé insisted upon the possession of the Ohio River as the major link between Canada and Louisiana and scathingly rejected any English claims to lands in the Great Lakes or the Ohio based on Article Fifteen of the Treaty of Utrecht which made the Iroquois subjects of Great Britain.²⁷

These strongly worded documents reached Mirepoix on 23 February with Rouillé's hopes that the convention would be signed in two weeks or less. The ambassador failed to inform his court that English attitudes were hardening, and did not make it clear that London insisted upon a comprehensive settlement and would not consider an armistice until this had been reached. As late as 5 March, Rouillé evinced surprise that England continued to press matters other than her claim to the Ohio Valley and the immediate cessation of hostilities.²⁸ The English, believing that Paris was insincere in its attempts at peace and that it sought only to take advantage of London's goodwill, chose not to alter their terms as expressed in the cabinet minutes of 20 February.²⁹ On 7 March, Robinson passed on these conditions to the French minister in London in an

official Counter-Project to Rouillé's proposal for a preliminary convention.

The French ministry was unaware of the extent of the modifications made in the British position since 10 February, and the English Counter-Project shocked them. The fault was Mirepoix's. Failing to recognize the essential differences between the English and French positions, he raised no major objections to English plans for the Ohio and Great Lakes areas, and only complained about the Acadian settlement because it was "definitive" and would preclude land communication between Quebec and Louisburg.³⁰ Still, the ambassador thought the Counter-Project doomed, not by the substance of its terms, but because it went beyond the French goals of confining the negotiation "to a bare provisional cessation des voyes de fait, in order to find the means afterwards, for an amicable conciliation."³¹ Had he reacted in a less timid manner, had he protested the conditions of Robinson's memorial more vigorously, Britain might have been less anxious to pursue hostilities in the colonies.

England never ceased upgrading its armed forces during the negotiation process. The ministry remained unconvinced that the Anglo-French disputes in North America could be resolved diplomatically. This could only happen in the unlikely event that the two courts reached an equitable compromise on their territorial claims. By adopting Cumberland's plan, the cabinet committed itself to a military solution to the problem. Britain could produce and maintain victories in America only by gaining a clear military and naval superiority there, and by isolating France in Europe so that colonial successes would not be offset by continental losses. In January 1755, England began to augment its armed forces and to bolster its weakened position in Europe.

The navy received immediate attention, for it was the first line in home defense and the key to victory in any colonial or maritime war. There were only eighty vessels of all sizes in commission at the beginning of 1755. Over half of the twenty-three ships of the line were intentionally undermanned and underequipped guardships.³² One of the first steps taken by the ministry was to prepare these guardships for active service by mounting their lower deck guns and completing their caretaker crews.³³ Also, on 20 January, Robinson and Fox ordered the prompt preparation of a fleet of seventeen ships of the line.³⁴ Three days later, the Admiralty issued press warrants and a proclamation promising 30 shillings to able-bodied seamen and 20 shillings to ordinary seamen who voluntarily joined the navy.³⁵ Within a fortnight, Anson won the cabinet's approval to expand the plan for manning the fleet. English sailors were forbidden to sail on foreign ships, enlistment bonuses were doubled, and substantial rewards were offered to private citizens and civil magistrates who turned over hiding seamen to the press gangs.³⁶ Public spirit was high as evidenced by the supplementation of these measures by bounties offered by the major ports.³⁷

In January 1755, it was imperative that England restore credibility and unity to the System and remain on good terms with Spain. To help maintain British interests at Madrid, Newcastle refused the seriously ill ambassador, Sir Benjamin Keene, permission to return to England. Ferdinand VI, not wanting to become entangled in the Anglo-French disputes, continued his policy of non-alignment, despite French efforts to depict England as a threat to Mexico and Caribbean. Once assured of Spanish neutrality, Newcastle could disregard a renewal of the Pacte de Famille and turn his attention to shoring up the Old Alliance.

London persisted in its endeavors to secure active Austrian participation in the defense of the Low Countries without yielding the advantages accorded in Article 26 of the Barrier Treaty. In mid-January, Holder-nesse resurrected the plan for the election of Maria Theresa's son as King of the Romans in an attempt to gain Habsburg goodwill.³⁸ Although talks between London and Vienna again bogged down on the question of Austrian sovereignty in the Netherlands, neither side wanted to see the termination of the System at a time when Anglo-French colonial disputes threatened Europe with the possibility of general war. Britain needed Habsburg assistance to protect the Low Countries and contain France. Vienna hoped to enlist English support to reduce Prussia to its pre-war status and to regain Silesia and Glatz. Furthermore, each party considered that its aid was an absolute necessity for the maintenance of the others' national interests. So while Newcastle bemoaned the wretched state of the Barrier, he was not without hope for an eventual resolution of the problem.

England formulated its policies in part upon the assumption that the pacific faction at Versailles would remain in the ascendancy. Initially, Mirepoix tried to bully London to accept an armistice by threatening that if hostilities began in America, France would be authorized to retaliate in Europe.³⁹ But the ambassador's subsequent actions belied his tough words. In early March intelligence arrived in London which seriously undermined Mirepoix's stance. The ambassador's conciliatory attitude was opposed in Paris by Rouillé, Machault, Belle-Isle and the D'Argensons, who argued that the English should be punished for their activities on the Ohio.⁴⁰ On 17 March, London

learned that the French ministry openly favored a war with England. France would have preferred to fight in Europe but lacked Spanish support, and sufficient justification to invade the Low Countries or Hanover, without which she would not venture a continental war.⁴¹ Obligated, therefore, to begin hostilities with England at sea or in the colonies, the French concentrated their efforts on the fleet preparing to carry the reinforcements to America, which Yorke reported would be largely armed en flute and would not be ready to sail until the end of April or early May.⁴²

English policy toward France had succeeded. Versailles was isolated on the continent and committed to fighting a maritime and colonial war for which it was ill prepared. The stiffened French attitude confirmed the conviction in London that the American disputes could not be settled short of conflict. The English ministers felt that the subject of the negotiations "is now, in some measure, brought to a period, tho' not yet decided," and so informed their friends in Austria and Spain.⁴³ Moreover, the knowledge that the French reinforcements to America would be poorly armed and unable to sail for from four to six weeks allowed London ample time to plan a counter-move. With France in a position of weakness both on the continent and in the colonies, England could act with more vigor in America.

Concerned by the new belligerency of the French attitude, Newcastle wrote to his old friend Count Bentinck in order to gauge Dutch sentiments. Afraid that if France were losing a war in America, she would bring the hostilities to Europe, the First Minister wanted to know what assistance the United Provinces would offer if Great Britain or Hanover were invaded by France alone or in conjunction with Prussia. His first

concern was the defense of George II's dominions, and he asked how the Republic would receive an English request for the use of eight to ten thousand troops and six to ten ships of the line. France, Newcastle thought, had several options in the Low Countries: she could overrun both the Netherlands and the United Provinces, or allow one or the other, or both, to remain neutral. England needed to know what the States General would do in each case, particularly if France offered the Dutch neutrality. Newcastle was acutely aware of French strength on the continent. Even if France provided the allies with a casus foederis by invading the Pays Bas, troops from Austria, Bavaria, and Saxony could not possibly arrive before the French armies conquered the entire region.⁴⁴

Also on 17 March, London learned of an Austrian plan to resolve its disputes with the Maritime Powers. The plan stipulated that within a year of the signing of the convention, a new commercial treaty be made between Austria, England and Holland, at which time new tariffs would be determined and a subsidy of 500,000 écus be given by the Austrians to restore the barrier and pay the Dutch arrears. If, however, the commercial treaty was not signed, the convention would be abrogated and its parties free to act for the good of their respective peoples.⁴⁵

Recognizing that the project intimated Austrian commercial independence in the Netherlands, Keith rejected the proposal, but at Maria Theresa's suggestion sent it to be examined by George II and the cabinet.⁴⁶ Although it had failed, the Austrian attempt was important for two reasons. First, it resembled the idea expressed by Newcastle in December for a compromise short-term settlement in order to keep the alliance intact. Secondly, the English ministry construed the proposed

convention to mean that Vienna still wanted to protect the Netherlands from France in conjunction with England and the United Provinces. The System was not dead.

Ambassador Keith also reported the general attitudes within the court at Vienna towards the defense of the Low Countries. The Empress, he was mistakenly convinced, was in favor of settling with the Maritime Powers on their own terms but had been pressured not to do so, as had also happened in November 1754, by her husband and Count Kaunitz, "who is absolutely in possession of the Emperor."⁴⁷ The Chancellor, who while not necessarily pro-British was "as little French or Prussian as possible," opposed spending large sums to refurbish the barrier fortresses and garrisons because they would easily fall to the French.⁴⁸ That is, unless they were supported by an army of fifty thousand men in Flanders which could be augmented to seventy thousand in case of emergency.

Believing their position in Europe weak, the English ministers had entered the negotiations in January with France in the hope of settling the Anglo-French disputes in North America through peaceful means. By mid-March, they had regained their self-confidence. The anticipated violent anti-Spanish reaction to the events in Honduras did not materialize, leaving relations with Madrid strained but still intact. Although France was augmenting her navy and sending troops to North America, she had taken no measures which directly threatened the Low Countries or Hanover. With the arrival of Braddock in Virginia and the rapid expansion of the Royal Navy, England had regained tactical and strategic superiority in America, and considered the French proposal for a two-year armistice a ruse to allow Paris to increase its armed

forces overseas without English interference.⁴⁹ Finally, the Austrian proposal of 4 March indicated that the Old Alliance was still alive, and the defense of the Pays Bas through the System a reality.

England could afford to resume her aggressive attitude towards France. On 18 March, the day after it had learned of the latest Austrian proposal and of the French inability to wage war on the continent and the weakness of its fleet, the Inner Cabinet met twice to discuss affairs with France. In the first meeting, the ministry determined that "all proper means" had been used to adjust differences with France in America, but "that these means have not succeeded."⁵⁰ The negotiations with France had broken down. The possible military consequences of this decision were then discussed: the war being brought to Europe by France; invasion of the British Isles, Hanover and Flanders; orders to be given to the fleet, and whether it should sail immediately; whether to intercept the French force bound for North America; whether to blockade Brest; and whether to order Braddock to attack Montreal and Quebec.⁵¹ In the second meeting, the proposed invasion of Canada and blockade of Brest, both offensive measures, were dismissed as too ambitious and contrary to English declarations. However, the cabinet resolved to send a fleet to Nova Scotia "with orders to fall upon and endeavor to prevent the French ships from going into or landing any forces on the continent of North America."⁵²

Rouillé's "Observations" on the English Counter-Project did not arrive in London until 20 March and in them he refuted at length each article of the British memorial.⁵³ The use of lines as borders would only add to the source of the dispute. Mountains and rivers were the usual boundaries because they were the most evident and least doubtful.

London would benefit disproportionately from the destruction of all forts in the Ohio Valley since Britain had no strong points to lose and France would be compelled to demolish forts in areas in which the English had never been. Because wherever traders went, trading posts and blockhouses soon followed, Rouillé insisted that Europeans be banned from neutral territories altogether. Instead, the Indians could travel to trade with whomever they chose. The Foreign Minister again ridiculed the English territorial demands based upon the implication that wherever an Iroquois had traveled was necessarily English property. As to the free commerce in the region of the Great Lakes, Britain might as well demand the cession of all Canada. The Lakes and the St. Lawrence were at the center of New France and "it would become impossible to preserve it, once the English were at liberty to settle everywhere and at their pleasure in the heart of the colony."⁵⁴ Since the British proposals on Acadia denied the land communication between Cape Breton and New France and threatened French claims to the southern shore of the St. Lawrence, France rejected this article.⁵⁵

Rouillé continued with an obvious appeal for public support. The commerce of the Ohio River, the immediate cause of the dispute, was worth less than a thousand pistoles per year, and was of so little consequence that the French court was willing to entirely forego it. But not the English.

It would be very sad and vexatious for mankind and for all Europe, if England rekindled a war the extent or results of which no one can foresee, for interests which must be regarded on her side as almost nothing, if separated from all designs to get possession of our colonies. A little more or a little less territory in North America should not cause a war; each nation possesses more than she can use for a long time to come. The object of each power appears to be,

not to expand, but to insure the security of what it possesses, and that is the evident interest of all Europe.⁵⁶

Though a preliminary and provisional convention was the shortest and simplest method of attaining peace, the French ministry would consent to a definitive treaty on North America as England wished, but only if all other disputes between the two crowns, including the Neutral Islands, were settled at the same time.⁵⁷

In a private letter accompanying his memorial, the Foreign Minister informed Mirepoix of the reaction of the French court to Robinson's Counter-Project.⁵⁸ France had long thought Newcastle's ministry weak and overly sensitive to public opinion. And now that London had found itself forced to pursue vigorously measures it had taken too hastily, Newcastle should not expect France to save his ministry from domestic embarrassment by accepting a preposterously one-sided treaty. What good were the pacific intentions of the English ministry "if they do not foresee the consequences of the steps they take, or if they have not enough strength to sustain them against popular clamor?"⁵⁹ "We see with regret," Rouillé concluded, "that war alone can end our differences."⁶⁰

The English Counter-Project was totally unacceptable. Rouillé ordered Mirepoix to assume "a purely passive line of conduct with respect to the negotiation, which we regard as absolutely broken off, at least unless the English ministers try to treat of the matter with you again."⁶¹ In this case, the ambassador could listen and if, contrary to all expectations, the British proposed new conditions closer to the French position, he was to send them to Paris, but take no further action. The French court knew that the divergent opinions

of England and France on North America could not be reconciled by negotiation. "If they are determined at London to kindle a war, all we can say to forestall that evil will not prevent it. They will even take our moderation as a sign of timidity, which for the English would be one motive more for hurrying on their offensive operations."⁶²

France concentrated on its war preparations.

The English ministry had decided to stretch its interpretations of "defensive" operations to the furthest possible limits.⁶³ It remained imperative that the forthcoming hostilities be confined to North America, and that England not be regarded there as the aggressor. While London felt strong enough to risk a colonial war, it was unprepared and unwilling to fight a continental one. Versailles must be denied the opportunity to bring the war to Europe.

When, on 20 March, Mirepoix presented Rouillé's firm response to the English Counter-Project, Newcastle and Robinson hastened to mollify the French. They assured the ambassador that the 7 March proposal was not an ultimatum, as Robinson had implied earlier. England insisted only upon its claim to all of Nova Scotia and to a land link along the Bay of Fundy to New England, and was willing to yield one of the Neutral Islands, and accept compromises in all other areas in order to achieve a definitive treaty.⁶⁴

Exceeding his instructions from Rouillé, Mirepoix began negotiations on these points with Robinson.⁶⁵ In Acadia, France wished to adjust the border to allow for a land passage from Quebec to Isle St. John. The ambassador insisted upon two twenty league lisières in which neither side could have forts or settlements, one south along the St. Lawrence River through Lakes Ontario and Erie, and the other east of the Wabash

River. The English boundary in the Ohio Valley would be a line south from Venango to the Alleghenies, and then along the western slope of the mountains. The area between the French and English borders would be neutral, open to the free movement of Indians, but closed to Europeans. Robinson wanted Crown Point moved north along Lake Champlain or demolished, and Mirepoix accepted this. Neither minister thought the other fully empowered to treat upon these new compromises, and so informed his court. Yet, both saw these proposals as a genuine move towards conciliation.⁶⁶

London clarified its position on the North American boundaries on 26 March, but the latest developments in the peace talks did not deter the nation from preparing for war.⁶⁷ Acknowledging the "inconsiderable" state of the military, the ministry proposed to quickly double the size of the army and institute a building program which would triple the size of the navy by year's end.⁶⁸ These measures required large sums of money. The cost of Braddock's expedition and the augmentation of the army cost almost a half million pounds.⁶⁹ The naval debt in December 1754 was already £ 1.3 million.⁷⁰ With the average ship of the line costing £ 70,000 to construct and equip, and nearly half that much to repair and refit, the ambitious program to augment the Royal Navy called for enormous capital expenditure.⁷¹

Neither Parliament nor the ministry had foreseen the scale of the increased hostilities in America, and so had not provided funds for such measures. Cognizant of this, the cabinet decided to ask the Commons for unlimited credit.⁷² In a very belligerent message sent to both Houses on 25 March, George II asked for their assistance in his efforts to augment his land and sea forces, preserve the general

peace of Europe, secure his just rights and possessions in America, and repel any designs directed against himself or any of his kingdoms. Parliament hastened to give its enthusiastic support to the King, and the Commons voted a grant of one million pounds to defray the costs of enlarging the military.⁷³

These events were carefully studied by the courts of Europe. George II had an opportunity to restrain military expenditures in order to avoid the appearance of preparing for war in advance, but shared the general feeling of the cabinet and the country that nothing should be spared in case of war. Michell, the able and perceptive Prussian minister at London, considered the King's message and Parliament's reply very bellicose, and believed that in the present atmosphere, it would be almost impossible to conclude peace with France. The grant of £ 1 million was more than double that given in any one year during the last war, and Michell warned Frederick II that this act might foreshadow an English willingness to enter into monetary relations with continental powers, particularly Russia and Austria.⁷⁴

The English had indeed chosen to accept the certainty of an imminent outbreak of hostilities with France in North America. The Inner Cabinet, amplifying its 18 March decision, recommended that a squadron of seven ships of the line be sent as soon as possible to cruise off Louisburg "with instructions to fall upon any French ships of war, that shall be attempting to land troops in Nova Scotia, or any other parts of the King's dominions, or to go to Cap Breton, or thro' the River St. Lawrence to Quebec."⁷⁵ Since the fundamental differences between the positions of the two courts precluded their gaining their points through negotiation, the ministry opted to win them by main force.

In response to the Mirepoix-Robinson proposals of 22 and 24 March, the French court insisted again that the renewal of negotiations on North America be predicated upon the implementation of an armistice and exchange of peaceful instructions to the local governors and commanders. France argued that keeping control of events in Europe, rather than in the colonies or on the seas, was the only way to insure peace.⁷⁶ George II rejected this because he believed that the French court had recognized their military inferiority overseas and sought only to hinder London's progress there. He approved of Robinson's dissimulation in the conduct of the negotiations, for he was not convinced they would succeed. Rather he doubted whether war might not be preferable to peace, "France being so low [and] we so superior at sea," and thought that England might never have another opportunity, when she had such a clear advantage.⁷⁷

Mirepoix's pacific attitude sharply differed from that expressed by Rouillé and from those which English intelligence reported prevailed at Versailles. Robinson thought "the French ambassador must either have private instructions to go on such a length, or must be the weakest of ambassadors; In either case nothing [could be] so right as to lay hold of the advantage of one, or the other."⁷⁸ Mirepoix was as poor a judge of the attitudes of the English court as he was of the French. He pictured English insistence upon possession of Acadia and their refusal of an armistice without a definitive accord as positive measures. He misinformed Rouillé that "the King of England, the Duc de Newcastle, and all the ministry sincerely desire to avoid a rupture," and declared that Granville had replaced Newcastle as the dominant minister at court and in the cabinet.⁷⁹ That the Lord President confirmed the "conciliatory"

proposals made by Newcastle and Robinson was very important to both the French court and its ambassador, for they greatly respected his ability and long considered him an enemy of France.⁸⁰

The French council was considerably less inclined to believe the peaceful intentions of the English ministry. The Foreign Minister warned Mirepoix of the futility of further discussions with London because "we differ too essentially in interests and views on the points that Messieurs the English ministers regard as a necessary base of the negotiation."⁸¹ Rouillé suspected that the recent English proposals signified either a true change in British attitudes, or more likely, were intended "to make us conceive hopes of conciliation which might relax or suspend our armaments."⁸² The French King would never yield his claims of sovereignty in three areas: the twenty-league lisière on the Bay of Fundy; the southern shores of the St. Lawrence River and Lakes Erie and Ontario; and the country between the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. France was prepared to negotiate on all points but these.⁸³ These points became the basis of the French position throughout the remainder of the negotiations.

Versailles attempted to compensate for France's inadequacies at sea and in the colonies by threatening her enemies with a quick and general war in Europe if England did not stop its aggression in North America.⁸⁴ In March and April, English diplomats throughout Europe reported the increasingly bellicose words of their French counterparts which intelligence from Paris confirmed. One French minister thought that his country's enemies must be able to see through the bravado and recognize the internal weakness and indecisiveness of a government which could not solve a domestic quarrel between church and state.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, Versailles' scare tactic was effective. France's navy might not be feared, but her army was.

The United Provinces were particularly susceptible to Versailles' saber rattling. Possessing no defensible borders and a relatively small army of poor caliber, the Republic was certainly no match for France or Prussia. Because they depended upon Austria and the Barrier System for their defense, the Dutch ministers were especially disturbed by Kaunitz's 4 March proposal for the defense of the Netherlands. The Hague saw it, as Keith had earlier, as an attempt by Austria to free herself from the requirements of Article 26. But unlike their counterparts in England, the Princess Royal and her advisors felt that Austrian actions demonstrated that English influence was no longer effective at the Hofburg and that the System was dead. The English minister at The Hague wrote that "it is next to impossible to make brick without straw, and to negotiate upon the footing of a System, which does not exist, can never bring us, let us have ever so much desire, to any reasonable resolution."⁸⁶ Austria seemed to indicate that she had left the defense of the Netherlands to the Maritime Powers.⁸⁷

The United Provinces made plans to defend themselves. The Dutch ministers agreed that if George II requested assistance they would be obliged to honor their treaties and send troops, but hoped that this would not happen. They were hard pressed already to furnish the sums required to augment the Dutch army, rebuild the barrier fortresses and increase their garrisons, all of which were necessary for their own security. Deprived of Austrian support, the Republic planned to concentrate her troops and efforts on only a few key fortresses, especially Namur, withdrawing the other garrisons to protect her own frontiers, and coordinating these movements with the Austrian government in

Brussels so as not to hurt the alliance.⁸⁸ The Duke of Newcastle did not disapprove of the Dutch plan as long as the troop movements were made in conjunction with the government of the Netherlands, but he questioned the emphasis on Namur. Although the Dutch had spent over £ 70,000 repairing the fortress, it totally lacked artillery and munitions, and would require an estimated one million florins to fully prepare it to withstand a siege.⁸⁹ Newcastle preferred instead the defense of the port city of Ostend, which was a vital communications link between England and the Low Countries.⁹⁰

The prevailing mood in the Republic was changing. In early March, the Dutch thought that the Anglo-French differences in America would be settled peacefully and that there was little chance that the colonial struggle would be brought to Europe.⁹¹ These attitudes had altered by mid-April. The negotiations in London had stalled, the French were threatening invasion, and Austria still refused to support the Barrier. Those who supported the System against France found their policies increasingly unpopular at home. Afraid that France would soon make some kind of application to the Republic, Bentinck and Yorke pleaded with Newcastle to convince George II to openly and effectively show his support for the Dutch government "if you will not see us all ruined, and the System lost forever."⁹² The Court of Vienna also was very concerned by the increased possibility of the Anglo-French colonial war being brought to the continent. Austria did not want to fight in such a conflict because it would require Maria Theresa to expend her strength against Louis XV either in the Low Countries or Hanover, when her principal interests lay in Silesia against Frederick II. Count Kaunitz assured Robert Keith that the Hofburg would honor its treaty obligations

with London, but stressed that Austria was unprepared for war and hoped that a rupture could be delayed as long as possible.⁹³

Austria clarified her position on the System in early June. Maria Theresa and her Chancellor insisted that the European situation had changed since the Barrier and Commercial treaties were signed. At that time, the French threat centered on the Austrian Netherlands. France now could employ Prussia with the latter's 100,000 man army to menace both Hanover and the Empire directly. The alliance must consider the defense needs of every member nation, and since all were in danger, one state should not request aid from the others without being prepared to reciprocate. The Empress held to the sense, not the letter, of the treaties. She would help the Maritime Powers as much as possible, but that aid would depend upon the amount of assistance England and the United Provinces contributed to Austria's needs. Kaunitz suggested that the only way to provide for mutual security would be for the powers of the alliance to make a new concert which reflected their current defensive requirements.⁹⁴

On 16 April, two days after this information reached London, Count Colloredo, the Austrian ambassador to Great Britain, submitted to Newcastle a note containing Vienna's proposal for a new system for the defense of Europe. It was founded upon the assumptions that France would attempt to make up on the continent what she lost at sea, and that a new reciprocal alliance must protect the Low Countries, the British Isles, and the Germanic dominions of the Empress and the King. Because the Pays Bas were the most vulnerable, their defense was deemed the most important. The Netherlands were to be safeguarded by stationing an allied

army there, compelling France to divide its forces if it sought to enter both the Low Countries and Westphalia. Austria was to provide a corps of 25,000; the United Provinces, 8000; and Britain, 8000 to 10,000 Englishmen and 6000 hired Hessians. England was also charged with renewing the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies which could provide an augmentation of 12,000 men in case of emergency.⁹⁵

Vienna predicated its support, however, upon two conditions. Imperial troops would not move toward the Netherlands until the English contingent was already in place or already had begun to march. Otherwise, France might fall upon the Austrian corps while it was enroute and destroy it piecemeal. More importantly, Vienna would not dispatch any soldiers until the Prussian menace had been neutralized, which could best be accomplished by the immediate completion of the long promised Anglo-Russian subsidy. Once this was achieved, Austria could form an army in the Empire, sustain itself in Italy with the support of Sardinia, and perhaps send another 25,000 men to the Low Countries. The King of Prussia, Austria postulated, was responsible for upsetting the balance of power in Europe and exposing the Maritime Powers to the greatest danger, by requiring substantial Imperial forces to remain in Germany.⁹⁶ Colloredo further declared that Vienna had no obligations except friendship to Hanover or its Elector. The purpose of Vienna's plan was to defend the Pays Bas, but if George II, as King and Elector, promised to defend Maria Theresa's Germanic possessions as well as the Netherlands, the Empress would pledge to assist the King of England "partout."⁹⁷

The King was greatly pleased with the plan. Despite the expense it entailed and the fact that it bypassed the Barrier System, it

promised protection for the Low Countries and his German dominions from Franco-Prussian aggression, and strengthened ties between London and the Hofburg.⁹⁸ George II was willing to subsidize Russia at higher rates for more troops, to employ 8000 Hessians for the defense of the Low Countries, and to renew the Saxon and Bavarian treaties in conjunction with the Republic so that these forces might be used for the good of the alliance. But like Maria Theresa, he would participate only under certain conditions. Vienna must take concerted measures with The Hague for the defense of the Netherlands, and although the King agreed to secure the Russians, he declined to consent to the Empress's other conditions. Instead, he insisted that Austria pledge to come to his assistance if his electorate were attacked and that Vienna immediately dispatch troops to reinforce the Low Countries.⁹⁹ George II tempered his initial enthusiasm for the plan when he received a note from Baron Münchhausen, his Hanoverian minister in London, informing him that Colloredo had stated that he would be happy if only a third of the Austrian demands were met. Except on the pivotal matter of the Russians, the King decided not to be too generous or hasty.¹⁰⁰

Knowing that Parliament would never enter into any system on the continent without military and financial support from the Dutch, Newcastle wrote to Yorke to explain the terms and the importance of the Colloredo plan. The First Minister urged the Dutch to pay their portions of the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies when they came up for renewal and expressed hope that the English example of bearing the cost of the Hessians and the Russians without assistance would inspire the Dutch to greater efforts for the Common Cause.¹⁰¹ The Dutch people were

not anxious for war, but feared that unless they sided with London, England would ruin their trade. Warning that there would be opposition to the renewal of the subsidies, Yorke still hoped that any disagreements would be overcome because the question would be not of ratifying new treaties, but of extending old ones, and England, by gaining the Russians, would eliminate the threat from Prussia.¹⁰²

English attitudes towards France continued to harden in response to French military preparations and the firm tones of Rouillé's correspondence. British intelligence reported French troops and supplies massing in Alsace, Brittany and the frontier with Flanders.¹⁰³ French naval armaments were progressing rapidly at Toulon, Rochefort, Rochelle and Brest, where the main fleet had assembled.¹⁰⁴ On 10 April, having been informed of the status of the negotiations and French military preparations, the full cabinet endorsed the earlier recommendation of the Inner Cabinet to send a squadron of seven ships of the line to North America to seize and secure any French warship and any French vessel thought to be carrying troops or war material. If the Frenchmen opposed the seizure, the English were instructed to take or destroy their ships.¹⁰⁵ A week after this endorsement, responding to intelligence on the suspected size of the French fleet and to Rouillé's tough letter of 13 April, the Inner Cabinet advised that the English squadron under the command of Vice Admiral Edward Boscawen, be augmented by three ships of the line and a frigate and that it depart at once for Nova Scotia. The Inner Cabinet also recommended that until the newly authorized companies of marines could be raised, 1200 soldiers should be transferred to the navy to serve in their stead.¹⁰⁶ These proposals were approved by the full cabinet on 22 April.¹⁰⁷

In March and April 1755, the Newcastle ministry received good news from two other sources. Sir Benjamin Keene in Madrid and the Spanish ambassador at The Hague both assured the English that despite French promises of commercial treaties and territorial gains and anti-English agitation by several dons, Ferdinand VI would remain neutral in an Anglo-French conflict in North America or in Europe.¹⁰⁸ Robert Keith's hard work and the financial needs of several German states appeared to have given new life to one of Newcastle's former pet projects, the election of a King of the Romans. In mid-March Keith reported that he had secured the votes of the Electors of Cologne and the Palatinate. Kaunitz and Colloredo seemed anxious to move ahead with the election, as long as France or Prussia placed no more obstacles in the College of Princes and inserted no additional terms in the Capitulation.¹⁰⁹ Newcastle, while still interested in the election, was not the force behind the revival of the long dead scheme. Cologne and the Palatinate had begun the present discussions but would not have acted without the approval of Prussia. Therefore, Newcastle considered the discussions inconsequential. He knew that Saxony and Bavaria wanted their subsidy treaties renewed, and surmised that they already had received offers from France.¹¹⁰ In his mind these subsidies were no longer linked to the election of a King of the Romans, but rather to the Colloredo plan for the defense of the Netherlands.

The English earnestly tried to avoid a continental war. In early February, George II and Newcastle had considered sending a fleet to prevent or intervene in the landing of French troops in America, but discarded the idea as being impractical.¹¹¹ In mid-March, when the members of the Inner Cabinet first seriously discussed measures to

limit French activity in America, they set aside thoughts of the invasion of Canada as too ambitious and offensive. Moreover, they decided not to blockade Brest, the most effective method of preventing reinforcements from reaching New France, because such an unmistakeable act of aggression in Europe would brand England as the peace breaker and bring war to the continent.¹¹²

By the end of April 1755, England regained the position of diplomatic and strategic superiority over France which she had enjoyed the previous November. The King and his ministers felt certain that the English interpretation of the Colloredo plan, which they believed Vienna would accept, would protect the Low Countries and the King's German possessions from French or Prussian aggression. Spain maintained her neutrality, depriving Paris of much needed support in America and Europe. The Braddock expedition and the newly created colonial regiments were expected to execute Cumberland's plan without great difficulty, and restore English preponderance in North America. Boscawen, ordered to set sail on 23 April, had ample time to prepare his ambush of the French reinforcements and their escorts, which would cripple the French war effort in the New World and destroy much of the French navy.¹¹³ George II, confident that his English affairs were in order, departed for his electorate on 28 April. There he planned to conduct Hanoverian business, further secure the defense of his German lands, and take a well earned respite from the English Parliament and English politics.

ENDNOTES

¹Virginia McLean Thompson, Dupleix and His Letters (1742-1754) (New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933), p. 851-52.

²Alfred Martineau, Dupleix et l'Inde Francaise, 4 vols. (Paris: Société de l'Histoire des Colonies Francaises, 1923), vol. 4, pp. 371-78.

³Jenkinson, Treaties, vol. 2, pp. 381-82, 385.

⁴The negotiators for the French court were the Marquis de la Galissonière, who was recalled from his post as Governor-General of Canada for this assignment, and Étienne de Silhouette, chancellor to the Duc d'Orléans and a minor court official. On the English side William Mildmay and the Governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, were appointed. Max Savelle, The Diplomatic History of the Canadian Boundary 1749-1763, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 32.

⁵Max Savelle with the assistance of Margaret Anne Fisher, The Origins of American Diplomacy: The International History of Angloamerica, 1492-1763, in the American Diplomatic History Series, gen. ed. Armin Rappaport, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 394-95.

⁶B.M. Add. MS. 32994, f. 300, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 27 March 1752, extract in Pease, p. 36; Savelle, Canadian Boundary, p. 41; Waddington, Louis XV, p. 54.

⁷B.M. Add. MS. 32850, ff. 219-20, Newcastle to Albemarle, Newcastle House, 5 September 1754, Private, extract in Pease, pp. 51-52. George II also favored recalling his commissioners if they were achieving nothing because he paid for their expenses from the Civil List. Waddington, Louis XV, p. 54.

⁸Savelle, Canadian Boundary, pp. 41-42; Waddington, Louis XV, p. 52; Savelle, Origins of American Diplomacy, p. 395.

⁹Mirepoix misjudged the English on this point. On 26 June, the cabinet, upon receiving news of recent events in America and the French threat there, determined to take measures to oblige the French to withdraw. B.M. Add. MS. 33029, f. 124, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 26 June 1754, extract in Pease, p. 48; This was confirmed by Newcastle in a letter to Walpole, B.M. Add. MS. 32735, f. 597, Claremont, 29 June 1754, extract in Pease, pp. 48-49.

¹⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f.122, Albemarle to Newcastle, Fontainebleau, 30 October 1754; Mirepoix lobbied for the governorship of the infant Duke of Burgundy, hoping to benefit from his wife's close friendship with Madame de Pompadour. René-Louis de Voyer de Paulmy, Marquis d'Argenson, Journal et Mémoires du Marquis d'Argenson, 9 vols. ed. E.J.B. Rathery, (Paris: La Société de l'Histoire de France, 1859-67), [hereafter referred to as D'Argenson Journal], vol. 8, p. 375.

¹¹When the sixty-five year old Rouillé was chosen in July 1754 to succeed as foreign minister after the death of M. de Saint-Contest, many at court were surprised. He was not a person of the first rank. And while he was a member of the noblesse de robe and held several administrative positions including head of the Marine, he was socially inferior to the Richelieus, Noailles, or Phélypeaux. D'Argenson, Journal, vol. 8, pp. 328, 379, and 385; Higonnet, pp. 74-75; B.L. Add. MS. 32851, f. 289, Robinson to Albemarle, Whitehall, 5 December 1754.

¹²B.M. Add. MS. 33027, f. 280, Albemarle to Robinson, Fontainebleau, 23 October 1754, Wednesday, Separate, extract in Pease, p. 55; *ibid.*, f. 287, Albemarle to Robinson, Paris, 18 December 1754, Wednesday, extract in Pease, p. 58.

¹³Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondence Politique [hereafter referred to as A.E. Corr. Po.]: Angleterre. vol. 438, ff. 18-20, Mirepoix to Rouillé, Londres, 16 Janvier 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 87-89; L.C. Add. MS. 35478, ff. 274-75. *Mémoire remis par S.E.M. le Duc de Mirepoix*, 15 January 1755.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, ff. 21, 23-24, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 91, 94.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, ff. 33-34, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 97-98.

¹⁶B.L. Add. MS. 32995, f. 5, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 16 January 1755.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, ff. 5-6

¹⁸A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 38-39, *Mémoire* from Robinson to Mirepoix, 22 Janvier 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 99-101; L.C. Add. MS. 35478, ff. 276-78, *Réponse au Mémoire remis par S.E.M. le Duc de Mirepoix*, 22 January 1755.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, ff. 94-97, *Project de réplique au mémoire de M. Robinson*, Versailles, 3 Février 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 103-6 L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 57-60, *Projet de Réplique au Mémoire de M. le Chevalier de Robinson*, 6 February 1755.

²⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 25, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 17 February 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 27-28, Cabinet Minute, Powis House, 9 February 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 29-30, Cabinet Minutes, Newcastle House, 10 February 1755. All are transcribed in Pease, pp. 109-11.

²¹Ibid., Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 10 February 1755; Pease, pp. 110-11.

²²B.M. Add. MS. 32852, f. 420, Cumberland to Robinson, 11 February 1755, cited in Charteris, Cumberland and the Seven Years' War, pp. 144-145.

²³B.M. Add. MS. 33029, ff. 167-71, Lord Halifax's Observations on Sir Thomas Robinson's Paper of Points, February 1755, extract in Pease, pp. 11-14.

²⁴L.C. Add. MS. 32852, ff. 505-6, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 16 February 1755, Sunday night.

²⁵B.L. Add. MS. 32996, ff. 34-37, Cabinet Minute, Whitehall, 20 February 1755; Pease, pp. 135-8.

²⁶A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 154-57, Project of Preliminary Convention, 19 February 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 126-30; L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 61-64, Projet d'une convention préliminaire, Remis par M. de Mirepoix, 23 February 1755, Rouillé sent two letters to Mirepoix with the project to further explain the French: A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 175-84, Versailles, 19 February 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 116-25; and *ibid.*, ff. 163-72, Versailles, 19 February 1755, six o'clock in the evening, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 131-35.

²⁷Ibid., f. 178, Pease, p. 118; *ibid.*, ff. 181-84, Pease, pp. 122-125.

²⁸A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, f. 249, Rouillé to Mirepoix, Versailles, 5 March 1755, extract and translation in Pease, p. 147.

²⁹A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 253-58, Counter Project for a Preliminary Convention presented by Robinson to Mirepoix, 7 March 1755; extract and translation in Pease, pp. 148-54; L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 65-71, Contre Projet d'une Convention Préliminaire.

³⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 44, Memorandum by Newcastle, Whitehall, 7 March 1755, 10½ o'clock.

³¹Ibid., ff. 44-45.

³²The full complement for the navy was 11,805, but only 9,797 were mustered. L.C. Add. MS. 33046, f. 369, Ships in Commission.

³³Corbett, J.S., England and the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 36. This was accomplished quickly because Parliament in the previous session had authorized the increase of the navy from the usual 8000 seamen to 13,000. Still, this force was unable to cover the slow and complex process of mobilization.

- ³⁴Ibid., f. 370; Waddington, Louis XV, p. 75.
- ³⁵L.C. Add. MS. 33046, f. 370.
- ³⁶B.L. Add. MS. 32996, ff. 21-22, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 3 February 1755; L.C. Add. MS. 33046, f. 370.
- ³⁷Corbett, J.S., England and the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 40.
- ³⁸Ibid., f. 184, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Memorandum, 17 January 1755.
- ³⁹L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 6-7, Holdernessee to Keith, Whitehall, 14 February 1755.
- ⁴⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 97-100, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 4 March 1755.
- ⁴¹Ibid., ff. 222-23, Extract of a letter from Paris, 14 February 1755, enclosed in Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 11 March 1755, late at night.
- ⁴²Ibid., f. 223; *ibid.*, f. 282, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 14 March 1755.
- ⁴³L.C. Add. MS. 35479, f. 45, Holdernessee to Keith, Whitehall, 11 March 1755, Holdernessee enclosed copies of the French reply to Robinson's memoir of 22 January, Rouillé's *Projet d'une convention préliminaire*, and the English Counter-Project of 7 March 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 183, Robinson to Keene, Whitehall, 11 March 1755, Secret.
- ⁴⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 196-201, Newcastle to Bentinck, Newcastle House, 11 March 1755, Most Secret.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., ff. 70-75, *Nouveau Projet de Convention*, in Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 4 March 1755.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., f. 62, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 4 March 1755.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., f. 91, Keith to Newcastle, Vienna, 4 March 1755, Private and Secret; *ibid.*, ff. 76-81, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 4 March 1755, Secret; *ibid.*, f. 93, Keith to Newcastle, Vienna, 4 March 1755, Private. Count Fleming, the Saxon minister at Vienna, agreed with Keith that Maria Theresa wanted to defend the Netherlands, *ibid.*, f. 89, Fleming to Newcastle, Vienna, 4 March 1755.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., f. 62, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 4 March 1755; *ibid.*, f. 92, Keith to Newcastle, Vienna, 4 March 1755, Private and Secret.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., f. 193, Newcastle to Bentinck, Newcastle House, 11 March 1755, Most Secret; *ibid.*, f. 341, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 18 March 1755.

⁵⁰ B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 48, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 18 March 1755.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., f. 50, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 18 March 1755, Most Secret.

⁵³ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 139-47, Observations sur le contre-projet des Anglois pour une convention préliminaire, 13 Février 1755 [incorrect, should be March], extract and translation in Pease, pp. 164-77.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f. 143; in Pease, p. 171.

⁵⁵ Savelle, Canadian Boundary, p. 67.

⁵⁶ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 146-47, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 175-76.

⁵⁷ Ibid., f. 146, extract and translation in Pease, p. 175.

⁵⁸ Ibid., ff. 280-283, Rouillé to Mirepoix, Versailles, 17 March 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 159-164.

⁵⁹ Ibid., f. 281, in Pease, p. 161.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., f. 282, in Pease, pp. 161-162.

⁶² Ibid., f. 282, in Pease, p. 162.

⁶³ Corbett, J. S., England in the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 43.

⁶⁴ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 297-305, Mirepoix à Rouillé, Londres, 22 Mars 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 178-89.

⁶⁵ Knyhausen, the young Prussian minister at Paris, wrote Frederick II that Mirepoix had a secret correspondence with Louis XV and Pompadour at this time, in which he received instructions more pacific and moderate than those from Rouillé. Waddington, Louis XV, p. 162; Newcastle and Robinson suspected something of the sort, for the ambassador had not been granted official powers to negotiate as extensively as he was. B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 438, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 22 March 1755. There might have been such a correspondence, but it is impossible to trace. Pease, p. 1., note 1, p. 191, note 1.

⁶⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 437-39, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 22 March 1755; also in Pease, pp. 189-91; A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 307-11; Mirepoix à Rouillé, Londres, 24 Mars 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 192-97.

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A DECISION FOR WAR: THE FORMULATION OF ENGLISH FOREIGN POLICY F--ETC(U)
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⁶⁷ France was to have both sides of the Wabash; the English western boundary would be a line from Canogohogue Bay on Lake Erie to the mountains of Virginia, then south to the thirty-ninth degree of Northern Latitude; the Great Lakes were to be returned to pre-Utrecht status with full access by England's Iroquois subjects; France would possess the lands to the north and England those to the south of a line from the bottom of Lake Champlain to the source of the St. John River to the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and, the forts at Niagara and Crown Point were to be destroyed. B.L. Add. MS. 32996, ff. 61-62, Sir Thomas Robinson's Three Points of Accommodation, 26 March 1755.

⁶⁸ The ministry proposed to complete the eight Irish regiments to 800 men each and place them on the English establishment, augment the Guards by 70 men per company, and recruit 5000 marines. Raising these 15,000 troops would add £ 200,000 per annum to the cost of maintaining the land forces. The navy needed 20,000 more seamen to fully man the fleet once it had been expanded, at a cost of over £ 1 million. Corbett, England and the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 40; B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 246-47, Money that may probably be wanted for the increase of the forces, Newcastle House, 12 March 1755.

⁶⁹ L.C. Add. MS. 33046, ff. 313-323, Various estimates for army expenditures in 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 246-48, Money that may probably be wanted for the increase of the forces, Newcastle House, 12 March 1755.

⁷⁰ Ibid., ff. 330-32, Navy Debt.

⁷¹ Robert Albion, Forests and Seapower: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862, Harvard Economic Studies, no. 29 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), pp. 85, 93; L.C. Add. MS. 33046, f. 369, Ships in Commission.

⁷² B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 418, Mitchell to Frederick II, London, 21 March 1755.

⁷³ Cobbett, Parliamentary History, vol. 15, pp. 517-18.

⁷⁴ B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 418, M. de Mitchell to the King of Prussia, London, 21 March 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 488-89, Mitchell to the King of Prussia, London, 28 March 1755.

⁷⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 57, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 24 March 1755.

⁷⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 511-12, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 31 March 1755; *ibid.*, f. 516, Rouillé to Mirepoix, Versailles, 27 March 1755, extract enclosed in above.

⁷⁷ B.M. Add. MS. 32853, f. 524, Robinson to the King, Whitehall, 31 March 1755, extract in Pease, p. 199; B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 55, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 5 April 1755; also in Pease, p. 200.

⁷⁸ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 55, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 5 April 1755; also in Pease, p. 200.

⁷⁹ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, ff. 362-65, Mirepoix à Rouillé, Londres, 6 Avril 1755; extract and translation in Pease, pp. 201-6. Because Granville's papers have not survived, it is difficult to evaluate his role in the government at this time.

⁸⁰ Ibid., f. 364, Pease, p. 204; *ibid.*, f. 426, Rouillé à Mirepoix, Versailles, 24 Avril 1755, extract and translation in Pease, pp. 211-12.

⁸¹ Ibid., f. 400, Rouillé à Mirepoix, Versailles, 13 Avril 1755, extract and translation in Pease, p. 210.

⁸² Ibid., f. 426, Rouillé à Mirepoix, Versailles, 24 Avril 1755, extract and translation in Pease, p. 212.

⁸³ Ibid., f. 429.

⁸⁴ D'Argenson, Journal, vol. 8, pp. 412, 450.

⁸⁵ Ibid., vol. 8, p. 467.

⁸⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 453, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 25 March 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 403-04, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 21 March 1755.

⁸⁷ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 8, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 1 April 1755.

⁸⁸ Ibid., ff. 1-2, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 1 April 1755, Secret.

⁸⁹ Ibid., f. 6, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 1 April 1755, Secret; *ibid.*, f. 48, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 4 April 1755, Secret.

⁹⁰ Ibid., f. 117, Newcastle to Yorke, Newcastle House, 14 April 1755.

⁹¹ Ibid., f. 5; B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 333, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 18 March 1755, Most Secret.

⁹² B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 162, Bentinck to Newcastle, The Hague, 18 April 1755; *ibid.*, f. 165, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 18 April 1755.

⁹³ B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 466, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 26 March 1755.

⁹⁴ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 25-28, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 2 April 1755, Most Secret.

⁹⁵ Ibid., ff. 145-48, Colloredo to Newcastle, London, 16 April 1755.

⁹⁶ Ibid., ff. 148-49.

⁹⁷Ibid., f. 150, Memorandum for the King by Newcastle, 16 April 1755.

⁹⁸The plan required an expenditure of nearly £ 500,000 for the 60,000 Russians, and approximately £ 100,000 for the 18,000 troops from Hesse, Bavaria and Saxony. This was exclusive of the £ 200,000 England paid in other subsidies. The North American expedition, the support for the East India Company and the augmentation made at home already exceeded ordinary expenditures by £ 1.5 million, and would be over £ 2 million the next year. Thus, the total cost would be £ 3 million per annum, and the nation was not even at war., *ibid.*, ff. 152-53.

⁹⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32996, ff. 79-80, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 17 April 1755.

¹⁰⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 182, Holderness to Newcastle, London, 19 April 1755.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, ff. 169-170, Newcastle to Yorke, Newcastle House, 18 April 1755, Private.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, ff. 212-13, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 22 April 1755, Private; *ibid.*, ff. 214-15, Yorke to Holderness, The Hague, 22 April 1755, Private.

¹⁰³B.L. Add. MS. 32853, ff. 447-49, Yorke to Holderness, The Hague, 25 March 1755.

¹⁰⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 66, John Pender to Newcastle, Penzance, 7 April 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 217-18, Yorke to Holderness, The Hague, 22 April 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 73, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 10 April 1755.

¹⁰⁵B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 73, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 10 April 1755.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, ff. 77-78, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 17 April 1755.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, f. 89, Cabinet Minute, Whitehall, 22 April 1755.

¹⁰⁸B.L. Add. MS. 32853, f. 448, Yorke to Holderness, The Hague, 25 March 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 51-52, George Gordon to Newcastle, n.p., 4 April 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 300-01, Newcastle to Keene, Newcastle House, 28 April 1755, Most Secret.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, ff. 286-88, Keith to Holderness, Vienna, 15 March 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 410-13, Keith to Holderness, Vienna, 21 March 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 414-16, Keith to Holderness, Vienna, 21 March 1755, Private.

¹¹⁰B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 299-300, Newcastle to Keene, Newcastle House, 28 April 1755, Most Secret.

¹¹¹L.C. Add. MS. 32852, f. 353, Memorandum for the King, n.p., 5 February 1755.

¹¹²B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 48, Cabinet Minute, Newcastle House, 18 March 1755.

¹¹³Robinson ordered Boscawen, on 23 April 1755, to sail "without delay" to North America, but he did not depart until 27 April. L.C. Add. MS. 33046, f. 365, Abstract of Squadrons Employed between April and November 1755.

CHAPTER IV

MAY TO JUNE 1755

George II's trip to Hanover was not a holiday from the demands and intrigues of the English court. While a desire to return to his native land where he could enjoy the benefits of near absolute monarchy was a factor in the decision, the King also had much work to do. At Herrenhausen, he felt closer to the course of events in Europe. He was at the center of the superb Hanoverian intelligence system, and could deal more directly, effectively and discreetly with the various continental princes and their ministers.

With Boscawen's sailing, England committed herself to the initiation of hostilities with France overseas. Nothing more could be done with respect to America until news of the outcome of the naval ambush off Nova Scotia and the campaigns of Cumberland's plan reached Europe. France had been isolated, Spanish neutrality assured, and Anglo-French peace talks begun. But the King's diplomacy did not end there. With the broad objectives of his foreign policy achieved, George II concentrated his efforts on securing the peace of Europe and the defense of his electoral dominions. By moving to Hanover, he could more closely monitor the pulse of continental politics and direct the negotiations which would lead to the achievement of four goals: rapprochement with

Austria; securing the Hessian and Russian treaties; renewing the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies; and the defense of the Netherlands, the United Provinces and Hanover. No one was certain that France would not reply to English aggression in America by attacking Britain's allies in Europe, so the King set about to strengthen the system of alliances directed against Versailles.

At the end of April, England made a concerted effort to inform her friends in Europe of the status of the Anglo-French negotiations and of her response to the Colloredo plan. George II personally informed the Dutch of these items as he passed through the Republic on his way to Hanover. Holdernessee, prior to joining him in Hanover, travelled to Brussels to help coordinate the defense of the Netherlands with Prince Charles of Lorraine and representatives of the Dutch government.

The day that the King departed for the continent, the ministry dispatched a flurry of correspondence. England had to convince the Spanish court that she was doing everything possible to settle the American disputes peacefully, and that France was the aggressor in the New World and Europe. London declared that English armaments were purely defensive and that it was striving to limit the war to America, while Versailles constantly talked of invading the Low Countries. Moreover, the ministry maintained that it had received strong support from the Hofburg and The Hague for its conduct of the negotiations with France.¹ At the same time, England informed the Court of Vienna of the latest developments in the negotiations and George II's response to the Colloredo plan. Keith was ordered to press Kaunitz, and if necessary the Emperor and Empress, to accept the English version of the Austrian

proposal. The English believed the Hofburg ought to take into account the fact that England had spent £ 2.5 million to increase her armed forces and on operations against France in North America, in addition to pursuing subsidy treaties with Russia, Bavaria, Saxony and Hesse-Cassel.²

Despite the positive words of Newcastle and the Secretaries of State, England's position on the continent was far from secure. Britain was pursuing a finely calculated policy of hostilities in America which if applied in Europe would result in disaster. An unsubstantiated report from a usually reliable intelligence source indicated that the French fleet had sailed on 26 April. This started a rumor that Boscawen had met the French in the Channel. Such an action would have been clearly an act of war, and would have denied England a casus foederis, thus exposing her to France's might without an ally. Upon hearing this intelligence, the King recognized the seriousness of the situation and offered to return from Hanover at once, if the ministry confirmed the rumor.³ The Admiralty advised caution because the report had not been corroborated by elements of the Royal Navy stationed off Brest. Tensions, however, remained high for several days until positive word arrived on 5 May that the French had sailed two days earlier.⁴

The Duke of Cumberland called his first meeting of the Regency on 8 May to discuss the new turn of events. The Lord Justices decided to promote Francis Holburne to Rear Admiral, place him in command of a squadron of six ships of the line and one frigate, and send him as quickly as possible to reinforce Boscawen.⁵ Fortunately, Newcastle previously had ordered four ships of the line prepared for just such an emergency, and these were already available.⁶ The other vessels were

rapidly equipped and on May 11 Holburne set sail for North America.

Newcastle was happy because things were going exactly as planned. Boscawen had a one hundred league head start on his adversaries and would have ample time to organize and prepare his ships before the French arrived. The English fleet in America had more fully armed battleships than both sections of its French counterpart combined, and the Channel fleet remained stronger than any force the French could field, even if Macnemara returned to Brest.⁷ Once the lightly armed French troopships were stripped of their escorts, "those transports must fall an immediate sacrifice to the King's fleet in America."⁸ With the presence of Braddock's troops in North America, the ability of the colonies to support them and prohibit the trade of Louisburg, and the early arrival of the English fleet, Newcastle believed "that His Majesty's forces there will . . . be able to support and recover all the rights and possessions of His Majesty's crown."⁹

The imminent prospect of England's striking a crippling blow to France's navy and position in North America naturally impacted upon Anglo-French relations. Newcastle believed that Versailles would take no major action on the continent or begin hostilities until it learned the outcome of events in North America. England would thus have more time to concert with her allies, which would discourage the French from beginning a European war and dispose them to accept "reasonable terms and conditions in America."¹⁰ The First Minister thought it correct to continue the peace talks even if they held little hope of success, for England had nothing to lose by so doing, if she did not slow down her armaments. However, he feared that the short respite gained by French inaction and the continuance of the negotiations would enable the

Dutch to delay further taking firm measures for their own defense and that of the Low Countries.¹¹

For the past forty years, the defense of the Netherlands had been the joint responsibility of the United Provinces and Austria under the provisions of the Barrier Treaty. But divergent national interests between Austria and the Maritime Powers, as much as the destruction caused by Marshal Saxe's armies, made the treaty ineffective. For years London and The Hague tried unsuccessfully to find a means of protecting the Pays Bas without compromising the Barrier system. Colloredo's proposal for a new general framework for the defense of the region was just such a plan. In order to work out the specific details as rapidly as possible, close Austro-Dutch cooperation was now important.

As soon as he arrived in Brussels, Holdernes met with Prince Charles of Lorraine, the Austrian viceroy in the Netherlands, several members of his staff and the Dutch representative, Major General Cornabé. Prince Charles favored taking active measures with the States General for the defense of the Low Countries, and was prepared to abandon those towns not specified in the Barrier Treaty and to employ Imperial troops for the joint defense of both countries. Although aware of the importance of Ostend as a communications link with England, he was not in favor of guaranteeing its security. To complete the defenses of the city would require expending 400,000 florins and flooding the local area, neither of which could be accomplished easily. Fear of an Anglo-French rupture and a possible subsequent invasion had dropped the credit of the Brussels government so low that the Prince was unable to raise money for defense purposes. Because the inundation was so unpopular, it could not begin until the last minute, despite the fact that it took three weeks

to complete. Prince Charles also revealed that there were only 21,000 effective Imperial troops under his command, a third of which were designated to protect Luxemburg.¹²

The Dutch tried to postpone the conference, but Holdernessee saw through their excuses and went immediately to The Hague. There he found the Council divided over the entire question of defense of the Low Countries. While admitting the danger of a French invasion, the Dutch ministers emphasized the unpreparedness of the Republic, the cost of a future war, and the poor treatment of the Dutch by the Austrians as reasons why the United Provinces did not take a more active part in the System. The people of Amsterdam and the other major cities did not want to pay for another war. When Holdernessee asked the Dutch to renew the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies, everyone with whom he talked urged him not to press that issue until the States General decided upon the more important matter of the actual defense of the Republic.¹³ Later, The Hague indicated that present affairs would be facilitated if England bore the full cost of the two treaties.¹⁴

The principal ministers of the Republic met on 8 May to draft the format for the Austro-Dutch defense of the Netherlands. Because of the army's weakness, they insisted that Dutch troops should not be sent to foreign lands until the borders of the United Provinces were secure. The Council then agreed to coordinate with Brussels for the defense of the Pays Bas, the withdrawal of Dutch soldiers and the employment of Imperial troops. The ministers based their contribution toward the security of the Netherlands on the defense of Namur. Since, however, it was ill-manned and equipped, the ministers asked Prince Charles to strip other fortresses in Flanders of their artillery and supplies for use in Namur,

and to provide all or part of its garrison. Holdernesse responded to the Council's questions concerning English support for the United Provinces by emphasizing that George II would spare nothing for their defense.¹⁵

Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, believed that the States General could not raise the sums needed to fortify Namur in the time available because the Dutch borders themselves required a great deal of improvement. Her solution was that England should give the Dutch £ 50-60,000, which would come from the settlement of Dutch claims against England from the last war, although she knew that an Anglo-Dutch commission had not yet ruled on the issue.¹⁶

Prince Charles responded positively to the Dutch proposals. He declined to man Namur alone, saying he could not send 8000 soldiers there without effectively abandoning the Netherlands. He did agree, however, to provide half the garrison and all the supplies and artillery needed, if the Republic furnished the other half. When the Dutch representative, Cornabé, said he could not spare a single battalion, the Austrian commander replied that he must await further instructions from the Hofburg, but to save time would begin to provide Namur with war material and stores.¹⁷ However, Prince Charles's lack of men, money, supplies and support from the Court of Vienna counterbalanced his willingness to fight the French. The condition of the Netherlands's defenses was grim.¹⁸

The results of the Austro-Dutch conversations did not please the English ministry. Cumberland, Newcastle and Hardwicke were shocked to learn that Austria was not providing the minimum 18,000 men required in the Barrier Treaty, and surprised at the exorbitant figure quoted by Prince Charles for the defense of Ostend.¹⁹ The receipt of this information

rekindled the English distrust of Austrian troop strengths, requirements and intentions which had grown during the last week.

The ministry was angry with the Austrians, and even more upset with its Dutch allies. Newcastle and Cumberland insisted that the Republic take a more active role in the defense of the Netherlands. They correctly questioned the wisdom of placing so much emphasis upon the defense of a single fortress, Namur. What would be the consequences if the French struck before the garrison was fully prepared, seized it by a coup de main, or simply bypassed it? Newcastle saw no use in fortifying Namur and yielding the rest of the country to the French.²⁰ He interpreted the Dutch protocol of 8 May as implying that the Republic would never send its troops to the Netherlands. He severely chastized Yorke and Holdernessee, both of whom had been at the Austro-Dutch meeting, for allowing the Council to make such a statement, and for not persuading The Hague and Brussels to defend Ostend instead of Namur.²¹

Granville agreed with the First Minister that when the United Provinces limited their efforts only to the defense of Namur and their own frontiers and failed to actively support measures to protect the whole of the Pays Bas, the Dutch made it easier for Austria to withhold assistance from the Netherlands.²² Furthermore, Newcastle cautioned that England would not send a large sum of money to the Republic unless it was for a bona fide reason. Cumberland, because he believed it would reflect directly upon him, strongly opposed such a payment. In any case, if the settlement was made in favor of the Dutch, the funds would be specifically earmarked for the defense of Ostend.²³

The English position generated a great deal of resentment in the United Provinces. Despite the failure of the Republic to defend itself in the War of the Austrian Succession, and the repeated warnings of diplomats well acquainted with politics at The Hague, Newcastle pressed the Dutch to pursue a policy based less on their own national interests than on England's. The States General knew that their defense rested upon that of the Austrian Netherlands, which Vienna apparently had abandoned. In the spring of 1755, Namur was the only barrier fortress capable of defense. The Dutch army of 32,000 was too small to protect the nation's borders, let alone man the barrier too. This was one reason why the Princess Royal's plan to augment the military by 14,000 was so important.²⁴ If the plan passed the States General, the Republic could send more troops to assist in the Netherlands' defense, thereby showing her support for the System and encouraging further help from Austria and Britain.²⁵

Strong opposition to such measures existed throughout the United Provinces. The augmentation would be extremely expensive and would not improve appreciably Dutch defense against a French invasion unless Austria significantly increased her support of the Netherlands. The silence and lack of aggression by France and the notion that the impending hostilities in America did not involve them convinced many people in the Republic that an Anglo-French colonial war, even if transported to Europe, did not concern them.²⁶ The weak state of Dutch defenses, the increased number of French threats to invade the Low Countries in retaliation for English aggression overseas, and the sailing of the British and French fleets, heightened tensions in the Republic. Under such conditions, many thought it unwise to take measures, such as

augmenting the army and defending Namur, which might anger Versailles and give it an excuse to invade the United Provinces.

Newcastle's accusations that the Dutch were not doing enough either for themselves or the Netherlands angered those better acquainted with politics within the Republic. Yorke and Holdernessee repeatedly wrote the First Minister that the United Provinces were doing all they could for the System under the present conditions.²⁷ The English envoy at The Hague sent particularly well reasoned and informative analyses of the situation.²⁸ Yorke maintained that the Republic needed support and encouragement from its allies if it was going to continue to spend money for its own defense and that of the Pays Bas. The Dutch ministry found it very difficult in this time of peace to increase its defenses against an enemy which had shown no signs of aggression, while its own allies gave little or no support for such measures.²⁹

Two issues came to dominate Anglo-Dutch relations in the summer of 1755. The first was the augmentation of the Dutch army, which both nations saw as an essential step for the defense of the United Provinces and the Austrian Netherlands. This could be accomplished only at great expense. The question of cost led to the second key issue, the proposed payment of £ 50-60,000 to the Republic. Initially, Yorke believed that the States General would approve the augmentation as necessary for national security, but would withhold funds for the defense of Namur.³⁰ The English money would be used to assist The Hague temporarily to fulfill its commitments to the System.³¹ But as the parties which did not favor involvement in any forthcoming Anglo-French conflict grew in strength, the augmentation seemed less likely and the Dutch government's position less sound.

The ties linking England and the Republic threatened to draw the United Provinces into a war in which she had no real interest. Most of the Dutch remained convinced that France did not pose a direct threat to them. They were angry with Austria and Britain, who had urged the Republic to increase her military and strengthen the Low Countries, thus risking upsetting Versailles, while they had done so little in the region. Still the Dutch ministers feared that any reduction even in the inadequate assistance the Hofburg afforded the Low Countries could result in a major political crisis for the Stadtholderate.³² This made London's support all the more crucial. The augmentation issue became a critical vote of confidence for the Princess Royal, her ministers, and the present form of government, while the question of the cash payment became one for Anglo-Dutch relations.

At this sensitive time, Keith's report of the initial response of the Court of Vienna to George II's interpretation of the Colloredo plan reached Hanover. Kaunitz refused to send troops to the Netherlands until Russia had secured Austria's flank from Prussia. Otherwise, France might attack and defeat the Imperial troops enroute to Flanders, while Frederick II invaded a weakened Austria. This would hasten, not hinder, the loss of the Netherlands.³³

The Chancellor hoped that the King did not consider the Empress Queen his ally only against France, but against Prussia as well. The English representative described the importance of the House of Habsburg's rival in German politics:

By what I have observed upon many occasions, but in particular in what has passed of late, this Court has the King of Prussia always in their eyes. They are in eternal jealousy of him . . . and their measures are and always will be determined by what they think their interests in relation to that Prince.³⁴

Kaunitz believed that Berlin, although not as powerful as Versailles, was just as dangerous. Frederick II, Kaunitz insisted, had upset the balance of power in Europe and it could be restored only by reducing Prussia to its former position, with Russia's assistance.³⁵ Meanwhile, Austria hoped that England was doing all she could to prevent an Anglo-French rupture. The consensus at the Hofburg was that any naval battle between England and France would lead directly to a general war on the continent, for which Austria was not prepared.³⁶ Even the unifying effect of the Colloredo plan did not make the Old Alliance a solid and stable system.

When George II learned of the new Austrian position, he realized at once its adverse impact on the defense of the Low Countries and Hanover. On 28 May, the King had orders sent to Keith instructing him to press the necessity and urgency of his version of the Colloredo plan at the Hofburg, and to Guy Dickens and Hanbury Williams instructing them to increase their efforts at St. Petersburg to secure the Russians.³⁷

Yorke learned of the change in the Austrian position as the courier traveled from Hanover to London. He told only Prince Louis of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the elder Bentinck, and probably the Princess Royal.³⁸ The latter, seeking to strengthen George II's personal ties to her government and to her family, took this opportunity to ask her father to be the executor of her will and her children's guardian.³⁹ The King accepted with alacrity.⁴⁰ This, however, was more an affair of the Maison than of state.

On 2 June Newcastle received word of the Austrian refusal to send troops to the Netherlands, and the next day met with Hardwicke to discuss its ramifications. They decided to press for the conclusion of the

Russian treaty by raising the proposed subsidy by £ 100,000 to £ 500,000 per annum in wartime or £ 500,000 over four years if the troops were not called, and also by increasing the bribe offered the Russian Chancellor, Bestuchev. The two men further agreed to postpone consideration of the Dutch claims and to continue to seek a renewal of the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies.⁴¹

On 6 June, Newcastle wrote Holdernessee addressing these and other issues. He urged that every consideration be made to secure the Russian treaty, and authorized Sir Charles Hanbury Williams to increase the proposed subsidy to the levels discussed with Hardwicke. With tension rapidly rising over fear of a general war breaking out within a few weeks, Newcastle ordered Holdernessee to determine how the courts at The Hague and the Hofburg felt towards an implementation of the Saxon and Bavarian treaties. Because these were participatory subsidies, they required joint requisitions.⁴² Newcastle thought that Kaunitz's ravings against Frederick II were merely manifestations of the Chancellor's well known anti-Prussian sentiments. He was particularly concerned over the rumors of secret talks between Count Stahrenberg, the Austrian ambassador at Versailles, and the French Foreign Minister, Rouillé. Newcastle suspected that Kaunitz feared French retribution if Vienna took proper measures to protect the Netherlands, and thought that France might have initiated the conversations in hopes of further dividing the Old Alliance. The French were making great military preparations at Givet, from whence they had launched an invasion of Germany in the last war. Newcastle told Holdernessee to ask the Court of Vienna specifically what it would do if France bypassed the Low Countries and attacked Hanover directly.⁴³

The First Minister concluded with a confidential discussion of a Prussian overture to arrange a meeting between George II and his nephew, Frederick II. Although Newcastle wrote that he would have been the last person to have suggested it or to think that any permanent advantage might be gained by such an interview, he thought that the offer should be accepted, no matter how disagreeable it would be to the King. The encounter could prove useful in relations with Austria. Moreover, conversations between England and Prussia might puzzle the French, making them more cautious in their actions in Germany. Even a state of mutual civility would have its usefulness. The proposed talks should be looked upon like the French negotiations: they would not hurt, and while they were in progress England would not have to alter any measures being taken at home or abroad.⁴⁴ The King's Hanoverian ministers, Münchhausen and Steinberg, agreed wholeheartedly with Newcastle.⁴⁵ George II, however, refused the interview. Yet the groundwork was laid for the discussions which began in September and culminated on 16 January 1756 in the Convention of Westminster.

The King agreed to Newcastle's proposals of 6 June and directed his Secretary of State in attendance to send the appropriate instructions. Holdernessee, having updated Hanbury Williams on the present state of the Anglo-French negotiations and on the European situation, authorized the £ 100,000 increase in the maximum levels for the treaty and insisted that Russia cease her aggressive actions against the Porte.⁴⁶ Although the King thought Austria unwilling and the Republic unable to act immediately to renew the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies, he still ordered Yorke and Keith to determine the sentiments of those courts towards both a renewal and a possible joint requisition that summer.⁴⁷

George II needed the presence of an Imperial army in the Netherlands to protect English interests in the Low Countries and threaten the flank of any French army poised to attack his electoral territories directly through Westphalia. With Austria deliberately withholding support from the Pays Bas and the Republic unable even to augment her army, France could ignore the weak and divided Pays Bas, march straight into Germany and seize Hanover. The King continued to decline to participate in an Austro-Russian conspiracy against Prussia, which had been a primary objective of Maria Theresa for many years.⁴⁸ Instead, he intended to purchase Austrian assistance in the Netherlands and to protect his electorate from his acquisitive nephew by completing the Russian treaty. That the situation was grave indeed was shown by increasing the level of the subsidy twenty-five percent, £ 100,000, without demanding a reciprocal concession.

By mid-June, George II was very anxious about Austria's recent behavior. Maria Theresa's adamant stance on the Barrier Treaty and refusal to adequately defend the Netherlands troubled him. Moreover, she initially had rejected his interpretation of the Colloredo plan, a project which he had been told was not an ultimatum. He wanted to know what assistance she would offer him if France or Prussia attacked any of his electoral dominions. England had just concluded one subsidy treaty with Hesse-Cassel, offered huge sums to Russia for another, and was prepared to renew those with Saxony and Bavaria. George II believed the Empress Queen would help him, but he wanted to know the size and composition of that assistance, and he wanted the information quickly.⁴⁹

George II was also anxious about the conversations held secretly in Paris between the Austrian ambassador and the French Foreign Minister. The Austrians seemed to have accepted French propaganda that the outbreak of Anglo-French hostilities in America would lead to a general war in Europe. Aware that the Court of Vienna claimed to be unprepared for such a conflict, the King was worried what Austria might do to avoid an invasion of the Netherlands. Moreover, Kaunitz had never informed His Majesty of these talks, and his previous explanation of what had transpired did not agree with the King's other sources.⁵⁰ Holdernessee remarked:

It is not the first time that Count Kaunitz has been observed to affect a disobliging and unnecessary mystery even in trifles . . . but in the present case, there is something unusually dark in the proceedings of the Imperial minister, and I must not conceal from you that suspicions have arisen in other courts of some duplicity in the Court of Vienna upon the present occasion.⁵¹

George II wanted to know precisely what Stahremberg's instructions were, what had transpired between the ambassador and Rouillé, and what the consequences were.⁵² On the eve of a war, to learn that the ambassador of one's most powerful ally was holding secret talks in the capital of one's imminent opponent with that nation's foreign minister, is nothing if not disconcerting.⁵³

The Anglo-French negotiations on the North America boundary disputes did not end with the departure of George II for Hanover on 28 April. England at this time wanted the negotiations to continue to order to mask her actions in the New World. Only a few days before the King went to Hanover, Robinson presented a note to Mirepoix which clearly indicated Britain's desire to prolong the discussions. While not necessarily agreeing to Louis XV's claims to the land south of the St.

Lawrence, the lisière on the Bay of Fundy and the territory between the Wabash and the Ohio, which Rouillé insisted were the basis for any negotiations, the English court was "nevertheless disposed to enter into a consideration of all the contested points."⁵⁴ This, of course, was only for external consumption. The King had made up his mind already that France had forced an inevitable rupture "by insisting on such points to which they know His Majesty can not and will not consent."⁵⁵

The gullible French ambassador thought the English were sincere and began yet another round of conversations. He met with the Secretary of State on 30 April, and reported to Rouillé that some important progress had been made. Robinson did not deny French claims to the southern shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario, but expressed concern that the Iroquois, England's Indian subjects, might become dependent upon France, since they inhabited the areas. Therefore, the Englishman insisted that the Indians have free navigation of the lakes. The ambassador also told Rouillé that the Secretary had consented to cede all the lands west of the Ohio to France, and agreed that the region between the mountains and the Ohio should be closed to both nations, provided that the Ohio River itself was neutral. Robinson qualified his statements by saying that he was not authorized to speak ministerially, but assured Mirepoix that these were the true sentiments of his court.⁵⁶ "Though all appearances are to the contrary, both in the public reports, and those even among leading men," the Frenchman believed him because Robinson "seemed so precise and positive."⁵⁷ He suspected that the English were trying to gain time, and that the unexpected strength of the French fleet at Brest had made them more conciliatory.⁵⁸

On 6 May, the French ambassador presented a note which authorized him to conclude the negotiations in all areas if London made a statement that it did not insist upon the three points in Rouillé's letters. Mirepoix stated that with the King's departure, he was free to leave England, depending on how he perceived the negotiations to be proceeding, and also mentioned that he had information that Boscawen's orders were to attack the French fleet partout. The English were unimpressed because they knew that the ambassador often left when the King went to Hanover, leaving his secretary in charge.⁵⁹ Moreover, the Frenchman had approached nearly every member of the ministry in an awkward attempt to confirm the admiral's orders, but had been put off easily.⁶⁰ Mirepoix gave the impression that France would concede several points once talks began again in earnest, but Newcastle believed that the ambassador once again had not been informed of policy at Versailles, and discounted the motion.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Robinson delivered a response on May 9 which declared England's desire to negotiate a peaceful settlement of differences in America through conciliation.⁶² Mirepoix happily approved of this note's wording, thinking that it would dispel any misapprehensions Versailles had over the English Counter-Project of 7 March.⁶³ Robinson was less sanguine, for he knew it was designed only to give France an excuse to continue the negotiations by not forcing her to break off talks with London.⁶⁴

Newcastle was correct not to consider the French ambassador's actions as accurate reflections of attitudes at Versailles. On 9 May, the same day Mirepoix approved Robinson's note, the French court sent a strongly worded memorial which reaffirmed French claims to the disputed regions, while painstakingly repudiating those of England.⁶⁵ When

Robinson received the memorial on 14 May, he was puzzled how to respond to it. Newcastle thought it "another most unreasonable, inadvisable memorial, to which we shall return a reasonable answer," while Halifax maintained that it did not deserve one because all that it proposed had been answered already.⁶⁶

Since the decision in March to send Boscawen to Nova Scotia, England had used the negotiation process as a diplomatic cloak of respectability to mask her preparations for war with France in America. By the beginning of June the talks had become more of a hindrance than a blessing. The fact that Britain was conducting direct court-to-court dialogue with France limited the range of acceptable English military actions.

Some Englishmen began to see the negotiations in a new light, arguing that Boscawen's orders must necessarily begin a war in America and that France would immediately transfer the hostilities to the continent. If this were so, there was little difference if war began in Europe or the colonies. The rich French East and West Indian convoys would return soon, and if the English seized these, they would strike a heavy blow at the already weak French financial system during the critical early stages of mobilization. Moreover, the capture of so many ships, so much cargo, and so many seamen would cripple France's navy and maritime commerce for years. Such an action, however, could not be taken while negotiations were in progress, without earning the opprobrium of the rest of Europe and collapsing England's series of defensive alliances. The King had instructed his ministers to reply to the French memoire of 14 May in a way which would assert his claims, refute those of Louis XV, and keep the negotiations going, while denying "the Court of France a handle to say that His Majesty is the cause of

breaking it off abruptly."⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the talks had to be terminated soon, for further delay benefited France more than England in their preparations for war.

The ministry's solution to this dilemma was to send a reply to the French paper designed to force Versailles to break off the talks. The memorial given to Mirepoix on 6 June was the toughest statement yet submitted on the English position in North America. Point by point, it rejected French pretensions and established English ones. The position taken was basically the same as that of the 7 March Counter-Project, but its substantiation was stronger and its argument more precise. The three French fundamentals cited in Rouillé's letters were utterly refuted, as was the latest French proposal for the settlement of the Neutral Islands. In effect, the ministry demanded that France must accept completely England's terms.⁶⁸

The course of the negotiations had been closely followed by the members of the diplomatic community in London. When these men learned of the contents of the latest English memorial, they recognized that the English intended it as the watershed of the talks. Michell, the Prussian minister, thought that Mirepoix would not stay long in London once his court had read the English response. The exorbitant British conditions were too strong and too dishonorable to allow the French to continue with decency.⁶⁹ The Prussian, Spanish and Sardinian envoys each reported that France had but three choices, either to break off negotiations, recall Mirepoix or offer more acceptable terms to England.⁷⁰ By this time it was obvious that Boxcawen's orders were hostile ones, despite London's insistence otherwise. It was ridiculous to think that

England had gone to the great expense of equipping a fleet and sending it to America just to observe the French disembark their troops.⁷¹

Mirepoix dispatched the English memorial on 7 June, and the diplomatic community of London anxiously awaited Versailles's reply. When it arrived eleven days later, many felt perplexed, for it contained no definitive instructions. Rouillé commented that the French council thought the British demands were even more outrageous than the 7 March Counter-Project, but he ordered Mirepoix to remain in London until Louis XV made his intentions clear, which the Foreign Minister expected within a week. Because he had not been ordered to return, Mirepoix thought that the next courier from Versailles would bring important papers to present. D'Abreu ruefully remarked, "True it is, that this way of negotiating surprises me more and more every day."⁷² Newcastle was not overly concerned. He anticipated a rupture because he knew that England would concede nothing important and could not imagine France giving in on nearly every issue.⁷³

Around the end of June, English attention remained focused on the continent, as the King and his ministers waited for responses to diplomatic initiatives made earlier to Russia, Austria and France. George II had travelled to Hanover partially to supervise measures for the defense of his electoral possessions. He achieved a major success when Holdernessee signed a four-year subsidy treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel on 18 June for 8000 troops at a cost of £ 36,000 per annum. Mindful that France might bring the war to Europe that summer, George II and his ministers insisted that, in case of emergency, over half of the force could be provided in less than two months.⁷⁴

Newcastle tried to secure a treaty with Denmark as well. The Danes were to be used only if Great Britain herself was attacked, and would have been stationed in Ireland to replace Irish regiments sent to America or England.⁷⁵ However, the Danish king's ties with France and his fear of reprisals from France's allies in the North, Sweden and Prussia, were too strong.⁷⁶ In words of classic diplomatic elasticity, the Danes signified their readiness to defend George II's dominions "when necessity requires, so far and in such a manner, as the circumstances of the conjecture and the particular situation of their own affairs may allow."⁷⁷ Denmark promised to honor earlier treaties to assist George II if the English crown and the Hanoverian Succession were actually endangered, or if Hanover was directly attacked, but thought that the hiring of Danish troops to allow British ones to be employed elsewhere in case of war would violate their neutral status.⁷⁸

In the United Provinces, the political situation continued to deteriorate throughout June. The augmentation of the Dutch armed forces faced stiff resistance in the States General. The opposition, led by Amsterdam, did not favor the plan for a number of reasons: it would overburden the people with taxes; the action would not deter France, since even with the augmentation, the Dutch army would be no match for the French in Flanders; and, the pretense that Europe was threatened by an Anglo-French colonial war did not require a casus foederis for the Republic.⁷⁹ Her Royal Highness lobbied many individual delegates to the States General, appealing to their patriotism and stressing that no city or town wanted to vote against a measure so critical to national defense.⁸⁰ To dispel the complaint that taxes had to be raised to finance the augmentation, she offered to agree to several fiscal reforms

which she had refused earlier, which would increase revenue between 150-200,000 florins a year. The Princess adjourned the States General until 25 June to enable the delegates to return to their districts to discuss her proposals.⁸¹ But the vote promised to be very close, and neither side was confident of victory.

The defense of the Austrian Netherlands was another major concern. Preparations on the frontier increased as France continued to build camps, purchase horses, bring up troops and stockpile war materiel. By mid-June, Brussels learned that the Hofburg had approved the use of 4000 Imperial soldiers to help the Dutch defend Namur under the condition that the Republic would send reinforcements to the Netherlands from the proposed augmentation of its army. By foregoing the defense of Flanders to help the Dutch and the Common Cause, the Court of Vienna stated that it had done all it could to fulfill its treaty obligations and that any further aid for the Low Countries must come from England.⁸² This move was only a sop to the Maritime Powers, for even if the Imperial army in the Netherlands remained intact, it would be swept aside if the French invaded. Moreover, Austria took this opportunity to refrain from reinforcing the Pays Bas, throwing the responsibility for their defense upon London and The Hague, while Vienna concentrated on Prussia.

The decisions to defend Namur at the expense of the other barrier forts and to send nearly one-third of the available Imperial troops in Flanders to help garrison it did not meet with unanimous approval. No one was fooled by Austria's false magnanimity. Always quick to scrutinize the actions and motives of his continental allies, Cumberland was not pleased with the scheme. Had the Austrians sent substantial reinforcements to the Pays Bas, he would have been glad that they had ordered

the 4000 men to Namur, "but without some army assembled in Flanders it matters but little how one or two fortresses are defended."⁸³ Both the Duke and Prince Charles of Lorraine feared that France would bypass the fortress and seize the rest of the country.⁸⁴

Newcastle and Cumberland favored the fortification of Ostend over that of Namur, and blamed Holdernessee, Yorke and the Dutch ministry for not forcing this point during the May meeting with the Austrians at Brussels. The two English diplomats and Bentinck argued that Prince Charles and his council had objected to the defense of the port because it entailed too great a political and financial cost. The people of the Netherlands found it ludicrous that they should concentrate their defense efforts on a coastal town facing a friendly sea when they faced invasion by the most formidable land power in Europe. Of the great barrier fortresses, only Namur was defensible, largely because the Dutch had spent a half million florins to rebuild it after Aix-la-Chapelle.⁸⁵ The United Provinces chose to garrison Namur with a combined Austro-Dutch force, partly to make use of a large financial investment, partly to show their support for the System, and partly because they could not have manned it alone.⁸⁶

Newcastle always had wanted the Republic to take a more active role in the defense of the Low Countries. He was not unaware that Austrian recalcitrance and French passivity exacerbated political problems at The Hague. Nevertheless, he pressed the Dutch to pursue a plan coordinated with Brussels for the protection of the entire Pays Bas, and to assume a larger share in the support of the System. At the beginning of June, the First Minister had postponed addressing the Princess

Royal's request for £ 50-60,000 until relations with Versailles and the Hofburg had stabilized somewhat.

Later in June, when France appeared to be moving toward acceptance of the English terms in America and British diplomats were shoring up relations with Austria at Vienna and St. Petersburg, Newcastle informed the Princess Royal of the English ministry's position on future monetary aid to the United Provinces. Complaining of the expenses England had to bear to maintain her possessions overseas and to secure the peace of Europe, he declared that "nothing more can be expected from the King in support of general measures."⁸⁷ If the Republic had a right to the money, it would be paid. But Newcastle and Cumberland opposed admitting a right in order to grant a favor, especially when neither the right nor the real utility of the favor could be proven.⁸⁸ The ministry wanted to know how the Dutch would use the funds and their impact on the augmentation.⁸⁹ Newcastle feared that the Dutch request for a large amount of money to prepare for a war against France was a repetition of a similar overture in 1748. "Holland must not be put upon the foot of a subsidy power when they ought to act in an independent part in support of their own real interest." he declared.⁹⁰ This was the bottom line.

The Hague was shocked and dismayed. The Princess Royal thought that if London could spend large sums in bribes on courts at which they hoped to gain influence, it could also spend them on a court that fully supported English policies. The augmentation might have been secured with English support, but now that critical project was in doubt.⁹¹ Her Royal Highness took Newcastle's note as a refusal "which would imply little less than abandoning her person, her family and the present form of government."⁹² Her father had just strengthened his ties with her family and promised to spare no expense for the Republic's protection.

The defense of the Low Countries depended on the support of Austria and England. Vienna had withdrawn its assistance long ago, and now England seemed to be doing so as well. The Princess felt confused and betrayed.

Bentinck and Yorke agreed that England's action was unwarranted and unwise. They realized Newcastle wanted the Republic to support actively a coordinated plan for the defense of the entire region and the System, but if these measures were introduced in the States General, they would be overwhelmingly defeated. The Dutch ministry wanted to implement such programs, but had to bring them forward slowly, one at a time, to insure their acceptance.⁹³ Its immediate objective was to pass the augmentation, which promised to be a very close thing indeed. Yorke informed the First Minister that the opposition party, which was far stronger than he had been led to believe, favored neutrality at any cost, and meant either to overthrow the Stadtholderate or drastically reduce its political power.⁹⁴ As for the £ 50,000, it was doubtful that the Republic would win the suit, but that was not the point. The object was to give funds to the Princess Royal, who needed them and would put them to good use for the Common Cause. Furthermore, the Dutch council unanimously agreed that it was not the time to bring up the implementation or renewal of the Saxon or Bavarian subsidy treaties.⁹⁵

When the English ministers decided to force a conclusion to the negotiations with France in their memorial of 6 June, they were quick to evaluate the military implications of their act. The next day, Newcastle wrote an incisive and thorough analysis of the pros and cons of sending Admiral Hawke and the large fleet assembled at Spithead to attack French commerce and warships. Those in favor of such a plan declared that Boscawen's orders necessitated the outbreak of hostilities, which France

would then bring to Europe. Thus, England had nothing to lose and everything to gain by striking crippling blows to France's navy and commerce. Those opposed to the plan argued that Versailles would be forced to limit the war to the colonies if England did not attack the French deliberately in Europe.⁹⁶

The questions of whether or not to send out Hawke, and if so, what his orders should be, stirred up considerable debate within the ministry.⁹⁷ Newcastle had suggested earlier that the fleet cruise in the Channel for a month to exercise its crews, particularly the landsmen. Anson concurred, saying that it would be better than doing nothing. Since the French fleet probably would not sail once it learned that the English were out, there would be little chance of confrontation. The initial orders should be peaceful but could be changed later by messenger. Hardwicke realized that there would be objections if Hawke did not sail, or did so without orders to attack the French, but thought that there would be even more dissatisfaction if, after all the expense of manning and equipping the fleet, the squadron stayed at Portsmouth and did nothing. If they sailed and accomplished nothing, events and accidents could be blamed, but if they did not sail, it would reflect a resolution to do nothing.⁹⁸ Attorney General Murray believed that the worst sort of inaction was to go out, raise expectations, and with great fanfare, do nothing. He declared that, "if they go it should be for something, but then it should be to destroy a fleet, not to take on merchantmen . . . and yet I agree with those who think there may be a war in consequence of it."⁹⁹ Boscawen's actions in North America might be argued as defensive, but similar ones off the coast of Europe would be called a breach of faith and cause the disintegration of the English

alliance system. When Anson stated that the fleet need not sail for two weeks, an immediate decision was postponed in order to gain the King's opinion on the subject.¹⁰⁰

The cabinet met the evening of 9 June to discuss the matter. While divided on the question of whether Hawke and his fleet of twenty-four ships of the line should sail or not, the council members agreed that it would be imprudent to commit a hostile act in Europe while the Anglo-French negotiations were in progress. The ministers asked the King's advice on what to do if France submitted an unsatisfactory answer to the latest English note. If Versailles declined the British proposal of 7 June, continuance of the talks might be construed as weakness on London's part since it would allow French fleets and shipping to return to France unmolested. Newcastle anticipated the war coming to Europe because he doubted Versailles would accept England's terms, even if British operations in the colonies threatened to push France out of North America. The situation in Europe was not unfavorable to Britain. The nation and its fleet were ready. The Low Countries were as well prepared as they could be. Austria would enter the war, and possibly Denmark too, if Hanover was attacked directly.¹⁰¹ In any case, the First Minister, recalling the King's reaction to the rumor of Boscawen's meeting the French in the Channel, surmised that His Majesty would have no objections to Hawke's sailing simply to exercise and discipline his crews, as long as no hostilities resulted from it.¹⁰²

Newcastle knew his master well. George II agreed that the fleet should sail to exercise its crews but specified that Hawke not be given orders to attack the French trade or warships while the negotiations were in progress.¹⁰³ The King thought it "more than probable that the orders

given to Admiral Boscawen will necessarily produce a war," but he recognized that the advantages of a preemptive strike on France's fleet and commerce were outweighed by the disadvantages of initiating hostile actions in European waters.¹⁰⁴ He deferred his decision on the matters of the French negotiations and Hawke's orders until he received an answer from his entire cabinet on three questions. He wanted its advice about what to do if France gave no reply or an unsatisfactory one to the English proposals; whether to declare war or begin hostilities without a declaration, if the talks were broken off; and for each case, he desired a draft of the instructions to be given to Hawke.¹⁰⁵ George II suspected there was a difference of opinion in the cabinet and wanted to know the opinions of all of his ministers.¹⁰⁶ The pace of events was quickening and the King wanted this information as soon as possible.¹⁰⁷

The King's instructions reached London on 28 June, setting off a flurry of discussion and meetings. But even as the Inner Cabinet and the Lords Justices deliberated, George II received word in Hanover of a turn of events which drastically altered his position in Europe. Austria rejected his interpretation of the Colloredo plan, thus destroying the design he had made before his departure from England for the defense of the Low Countries and his German possessions. With the probability of war being declared in only a few weeks, England faced France alone on the continent.

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ENDNOTES

¹ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 290-95, Robinson to Keene, Whitehall, 28 April 1755, Very Secret; *ibid.*, ff. 299-301, Newcastle to Keene, Newcastle House, 28 April 1755, Most Secret; *ibid.*, ff. 309-10, Newcastle to General Wall, Newcastle House, 28 April 1755.

² Holdernessee enclosed extracts of Rouillé's 27 March and 13 April letters to Mirepoix, and the English responses to them of 5 and 25 April. L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 116-32, Holdernessee to Keith, Whitehall, 25 April 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 312, Newcastle to Keith, Newcastle House, 28 April 1755, Private.

³ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 44-45, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 18 May 1755; *ibid.* f. 46, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 18 May 1755, P.S. Entre-nous.

⁴ Corbett, J.S. England in the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 47; Lawrence Gipson, The Years of Defeat, pp. 104, 106 n. 27; B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 459-60, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 9 May 1755, Private. Earlier intelligence had indicated that the French fleet contained two squadrons: the first, under Dubois de la Motte consisted of three capital ships and three frigates armées en guerre, and ten of the line armées en flutes serving as transports; and the regular Brest squadron commanded by Macnemara, comprised of six sail of the line and three lesser vessels fully armed. England also knew that Macnemara probably would escort De la Motte only part of the way, at which time the transports would continue to Louisburg and Macnemara return to Brest.

⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32996, ff. 97-98, Minute, Whitehall, 8 May 1755.

⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 361, Mr. Cleveland to Newcastle, the Admiralty, 1 May 1755; *ibid.*, f. 461, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 9 May 1755, Private.

⁷ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 459, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 9 May 1755, Private; Corbett, England in the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, p. 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 460.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

- ¹¹ Ibid., ff. 462-63.
- ¹² Ibid., ff. 363-365, Holdernessee to Newcastle, 2 May 1755.
- ¹³ Ibid., ff. 431-37, Holdernessee to Robinson, The Hague, 9 May 1755, Secret.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., f. 458, Protocol of a meeting of the Dutch council at The Hague on 8 May, and signed the next day. Enclosed in *ibid.*, ff. 439-458, Holdernessee to Newcastle, The Hague, 9 May 1755.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., ff. 453-58.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., ff. 439-40, Holdernessee to Newcastle, The Hague, 9 May 1755.
- ¹⁷ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 14-15, Mitchell to Newcastle, Brussels, 16 May 1755.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., ff. 12-13, Mitchell to Newcastle, Brussels, 16 May 1755, Private. Dutch troops withdrawing from the barrier fortresses through Brussels had let the word out that they would not be replaced. The people of the country were upset, and considered Dutch abandonment worse than Austrian neglect. Another loan the government had tried to arrange collapsed as merchants, fearing for the security of their investments, cancelled their agreements.
- ¹⁹ An English officer had estimated earlier that Ostend could be defended for half the figure quoted by the Austrian Commander. B.L. Add. MS. 32854, ff. 389-90, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 6 May 1755, Private; *ibid.*, f. 541, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 16 May 1755.
- ²⁰ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 256-57, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 30 May 1755, Private; B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 67, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 20 June 1755, Private.
- ²¹ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 74-76, Newcastle to Yorke, Newcastle House, 20 May 1755, Very Private.
- ²² Ibid.; *ibid.*, f. 361, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 6 June 1755, Private.
- ²³ Ibid., ff. 3-4, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 16 May 1755, Very Private.
- ²⁴ The plan would cost £ 90,000 in levy money and two million florins per annum to maintain. B.L. Add. MS. 32855 f. 64, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 20 May 1755, Very Private.
- ²⁵ Ibid., ff. 289-90, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 1 June 1755, Secret.

²⁶B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 5, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 1 April 1755, Secret; *ibid.*, f. 467, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 9 May 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32855, f. 149, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 23 May 1755, Very Private.

²⁷B.L. Add. MS. 32855, f. 147, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 23 May 1755, Very Private; *ibid.*, f. 289, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 1 June 1755, Secret.

²⁸Yorke was the secretary of the embassy at Paris from 1749 to 1751 prior to becoming the English Minister at The Hague, and the years of experience at these two centers of diplomacy seasoned his judgment. Moreover, unlike many other diplomats who owed their appointment to Newcastle's patronage, Yorke could afford to disagree with the First Minister on some issues, because his father, the Lord Chancellor, was Newcastle's close friend and political ally.

²⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32855, f. 63, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 20 May 1755, Very Private.

³⁰*Ibid.*, f. 10, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 16 May 1755, Very Private.

³¹*Ibid.*, f. 66, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 20 May 1755, P.S. to Very Private.

³²*Ibid.*, f. 350 Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 3 June 1755, Private.

³³Public Record Office, State Papers Foreign [hereafter referred to as P.R.O., S.P.F.], Austria, 196, Keith to Holdernessee, 22 May 1755, summarized in Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, p. 12.

³⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32855, f. 102, Keith to Newcastle, Vienna, 22 May 1755, Private.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*, ff. 20-21, Fleming to Newcastle, Vienna, 16 May 1755.

³⁷*Ibid.*, ff. 236-37, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 28 May 1755.

³⁸The Pensionary still was unconvinced of French designs upon the Low Countries, and the English envoy did not inform him, fearing that Stein would use the knowledge to embarrass the ministry in the States General. *Ibid.*, ff. 316-17, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 3 June 1755, Private.

³⁹*Ibid.*, ff. 399-400, Yorke to Holdernessee, The Hague, 3 June 1755, Secret.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, ff. 401-402, Holdernessee to Yorke, Hanover, 8 June 1755, Secret.

⁴¹Ibid., ff. 314-15, Notes to Holdernessee, Powis House, 3 June 1755.

⁴²Ibid., ff. 358-59, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 6 June 1755.

⁴³Ibid., f. 353.

⁴⁴Ibid., ff. 365-66, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 6 June 1755, Entre-nous. Newcastle had previously arranged with Holdernessee that these Entre-nous should not be shown to anyone else, including the King, unless specifically stated.

⁴⁵B.L. Add. MS. 32856, ff. 38-39, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 18 June 1755, Entre-Nous.

⁴⁶Ibid., ff. 31-32, Holdernessee to Hanbury Williams, Hanover, 17 June 1755, Most Secret.

⁴⁷B.L. Add. MS., 32855, f. 441, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 8 June 1755; B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 22, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 17 June 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 23-24, Holdernessee to Keith, Hanover, 17 June 1755.

⁴⁸On 30 October, 1750, England adhered to the Austro-Russian treaty of alliance of 1746, save for the secret article directed against Prussia, and since then had refused to join in such a league. Maria Theresa's refusal to send troops immediately to the Netherlands did not change the King's mind. Holdernessee commented that "if the Count of Vienna . . . did ever entertain hopes that His Majesty would ever have joined in so wild and extravagant a view as that of making the destruction of the King of Prussia's power the condition upon which the House of Austria would have offered their assistance to the Maritime Powers against France, it was high time they should be undeceived." B.M. Add. MS. 32855, f. 353, Holdernessee to Williams, 6 June 1755, cited in David Bayne Horn, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and European Diplomacy (1747-58), (London: George G. Harrap, 1930), p. 201.

⁴⁹B.L. Add. MS., 32856, ff. 26-27, Holdernessee to Keith, Hanover, 17 June 1755, Most Secret.

⁵⁰Ibid., f. 29, Holdernessee to Keith, Hanover, 17 June 1755, Secret.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³These conversations, which laid the groundwork for later secret discussions between Austria and France culminating in the Treaty of Versailles of 1 May 1763, bear some interesting similarities to those between England and Prussia, which led to the Convention of Westminster.

⁵⁴ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 438, f. 441, English Note, 25 April 1755; extract and translation in Pease, p. 215; L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 131-132, Note remis à S.E. Le Duc de Mirepoix, 24 April 1755, enclosed within ibid., ff. 116-19, Holdernesse to Keith, Whitehall, 25 April 1755.

⁵⁵ L.C. Add. MS., 35479, f. 116, Holdernesse to Keith, Whitehall, 25 April 1755.

⁵⁶ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 439, f. 8, Mirepoix à Rouillé, Londres, 1 May 1755; extract and translation in Pease, pp. 216-217.

⁵⁷ Ibid., f. 9; extract and translation in Pease, p. 218.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 152-53, Narrative of what passed between Sir T. Robinson and the French Ambassador on 6 and 7 May, 8 May 1755 enclosed in Ibid., ff. 146-47, Holdernesse to Keith, Hanover, 20 May 1755; ibid., ff. 148-49, Note Remise par S.E. Le Duc de Mirepoix, 6 May 1755, enclosed in the same letter from Holdernesse to Keith.

⁶⁰ Once while dining with the ambassador, Granville and Robinson blatantly lied to Mirepoix. They told him that Boscawen's orders were strictly defensive and that the admiral was to act offensively only if France opened hostilities in Acadia or one of the other established colonies. Waddington, Louis XV, p. 97. That Mirepoix accepted this explanation and reported it to his court reflects Mirepoix's diplomatic naiveté.

⁶¹ B.L. Add. MS. 32854, f. 393, Newcastle to Yorke, Newcastle House, 6 May 1755.

⁶² L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 150-51, Réponse à la lettre remise par l'Ambassadeur de France le 6^e Mai 1755, remise à S.E. Le Duc de Mirepoix, 9 May 1755.

⁶³ Ibid., f. 153, Narrative of what passed between Sir T. Robinson and the French Ambassador on 6 and 7 May, 8 May 1755.

⁶⁴ Ibid., ff. 155-56, Robinson to Yorke, Whitehall, 9 May 1755.

⁶⁵ A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 439, ff. 38-45, Mémoire, 9 May 1755; extract and translation in Pease, pp. 221-29.

⁶⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 37-38, Newcastle to the Marquis of Hartington, Claremont, 17 May 1755; ibid., f. 22, Robinson to Newcastle, Whitehall, 16 May 1755.

⁶⁷ Ibid., f. 191, Holdernesse to Robinson, Hanover, 25 May 1755, Secret.

⁶⁸L.C. Add. MS. 35479, ff. 273-84, Réponse remise Le 6^{me} de Juin au Mémoire donné par Le Duc de Mirepoix Le 14^{me} de Mai 1755, 6 June 1755, enclosed in *ibid.*, ff. 255-56, Holdernesse to Keith, Hanover, 17 June 1755, America; also in A.E. Corr. Pol.: Angleterre, vol. 439, ff. 172-178, English Answer of June 7, 1755; extract and translation in Pease, pp. 234-43. The Court of France had to yield all of Acadia and Nova Scotia; accept the St. Lawrence River and Lakes Erie and Ontario as the Anglo-French border with a twenty-league lisière on their southern shores open for trade; recognize the lands between the mountains and the Ohio as English; consider the region between the Ohio and the Wabash as neutral, open only for commerce; establish the eastern boundary of New France along a line twenty leagues east of the Wabash; and, destroy all their forts on English or neutral territory.

⁶⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 464-65, Michell to King of Prussia, London, 10 June 1755.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, f. 465; *ibid.*, f. 492, D'Abreu to General Wall, London, 13 June 1755; *ibid.*, f. 502, Comte le Perron to Comte Lascaris, London, 13 June 1755.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, f. 502, Comte de Perron to Comte Lascaris, London, 13 June 1755.

⁷²B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 48, D'Abreau to General Wall, London, 19 June 1755.

⁷³*Ibid.*, f. 51, Comte de Perron to the King of Sardinia, London, 19 June 1755.

⁷⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 389-396, Holdernesse to Newcastle, Hanover, 8 June 1755.

⁷⁵P.R.O., S.P.F., Denmark, 98, Holdernesse to Titley, Whitehall, 18 April 1755. Printed in British Diplomatic Instructions 1689-1789, 7 vols. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1926), vol. 3. Denmark, edited by James Frederick Chance, p. 156.

⁷⁶Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, pp. 26-29.

⁷⁷P.R.O., S.P.F., Denmark, 98, Titley to Holdernesse, 15 April 1755, cited in Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, p. 28.

⁷⁸Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, p. 28.

⁷⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32856, ff. 74-75, Grimaldi to D'Abreau, The Hague, 20 June 1755.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, f. 489, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 13 June 1755, Private.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, f. 75, Grimaldi to D'Abreu, The Hague, 20 June 1755.

⁸² B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 262-63, Kaunitz to M. de Zoehrer, Vienna, 30 May 1755.

⁸³ Ibid., f. 530, Cumberland to Newcastle, Shrubs-Hall, 15 June 1755.

⁸⁴ B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 67, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 20 June 1755, Private; *ibid.*, f. 6, Mitchell to Robinson, Brussels, 17 June 1755, Private.

⁸⁵ Ibid., ff. 262-263, List of the Present State of the Barrier Towns, enclosed with *ibid.*, ff. 260-61, Mitchell to Newcastle, Brussels, 27 June 1755.

⁸⁶ Ibid., f. 240, Bentinck to Newcastle, The Hague, 27 June 1755.

⁸⁷ Ibid., f. 63, Newcastle to the Princess Royal of Orange, Claremont, 20 June 1755.

⁸⁸ Ibid., ff. 67-68, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 20 June 1755, Private.

⁸⁹ Ibid., f. 68.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., f. 141, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 24 June 1755, Private.

⁹² Ibid., f. 237, Bentinck to Newcastle, The Hague, 27 June 1755.

⁹³ Ibid., f. 142, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 24 June 1755, Private; *ibid.*, f. 240, Bentinck to Newcastle, The Hague, 27 June 1755.

⁹⁴ Ibid., ff. 243-44, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 27 June 1755, Secret.

⁹⁵ Ibid., ff. 143-44, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 24 June 1755, Private; *ibid.*, f. 241, Bentinck to Newcastle, The Hague, 27 June 1755.

⁹⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 32855, ff. 381-84, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 7 June 1755.

⁹⁷ For an excellent discussion of this important issue, see Corbett, England in the Seven Years' War, vol. 1, pp. 50-62, and to a lesser degree Charteris, Cumberland and the Seven Years' War, pp. 162-65.

⁹⁸ Ibid., ff. 442-43, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 8 June 1755, at night. The ministry carefully drafted instructions given to diplomats and military commanders serving overseas. Initial orders were particularly important because the slowness and unreliability of contemporary communications made subsequent changes difficult to effect.

⁹⁹Ibid., ff. 444-45, Murray to Newcastle, 9 June 1755.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., ff. 443, 445.

¹⁰¹Ibid., ff. 479-83, Newcastle to Holderness, Claremont, 13 June 1755.

¹⁰²Ibid., f. 480.

¹⁰³B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 94, Holderness to Robinson, Hanover, 22 June 1755, Most Secret.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., ff. 95-96.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., f. 95, 97.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., f. 106, Holderness to Newcastle, Hanover, 23 June 1755, Entre-nous.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., f. 97, Holderness to Robinson, Hanover, 22 June 1755, Most Secret. The King commanded that the cabinet's advice be sent to him by extraordinary messenger and packet boat.

CHAPTER V

JULY 1755

The Court of Vienna clarified its position on the terms of the Colloredo plan on 19 June, when Count Kaunitz presented Robert Keith with a detailed written response to George II's modification of the Austrian project. Maria Theresa, the Chancellor explained, wished to support the Common Cause but would do so only if she felt secure from Prussia and if there was an allied army in place to protect the Netherlands.

The Terms of the Hofburg's new proposal were essentially those of its earlier plan. Austria offered to send an army of 20,000 men that summer to the Low Countries, in addition to her troops already in Flanders and Luxemburg, if England met certain conditions. An allied army must be formed in the Pays Bas, consisting of 30,000 Imperial troops, 20,000 Englishmen or men in English pay, and a minimum of 8000 Dutch.¹ George II had to explain clearly his treaty obligations as King of Great Britain and Elector of Hanover to Maria Theresa, conclude a subsidy treaty with St. Petersburg for troops which Austria could use to defend herself from Prussia, and assure the Sardinians that they had nothing to fear in Italy from the Court of Vienna. Finally, all parties contributing to the allied army in the Low Countries

were to sign a convention in which they agreed to the command structure of that force, its plan of operations and those articles which had created it.²

Keith was shocked, and at once requested an audience with the Emperor and Empress. He argued that England had always considered the sending of Austrian troops to defend Flanders as a sine qua non since this alone would keep the Dutch Republic in the alliance and the System operational. All other measures, plans and subsidies depended upon this. Keith presented his case on 22 June, but their Imperial Majesties supported the position outlined by their Chancellor, saying that perhaps previously they had gone too far in favor of England.³

The Austrians were reluctant to participate in a new Anglo-French war and believed hostilities in America would spread quickly to the continent. They urged England to come to a negotiated settlement with France or at least postpone a rupture as long as possible. The Dutch had shown they would be of little use in the defense of the Netherlands and the Russians had not agreed yet to a subsidy. Moreover, Kaunitz argued that the French court desired a peaceful resolution of the disputes and would concede more to England if London changed its dispositions to further the negotiations than if the British brought on a war. The Chancellor recognized that there was little hope of England quickly forcing Versailles to come to terms in the New World. For while France was exhausted and financially weak, she possessed great resources, and would most likely win the first series of campaigns on the continent against Britain's allies.⁴ Keith, however, remained mistakenly convinced that Maria Theresa and her Chancellor warmly supported the System against France.⁵

As directed by the King, the English envoy questioned the Court of Vienna on several other issues. The Hofburg refused to express its sentiments either on the Bavarian and Saxon subsidies or on the details of their support for the King's German dominions until George II replied to similar Austrian questions stated earlier in the Colloredo proposal and the réponse par écrit.⁶ While discussing the protection of the German possessions of the King and the Empress, Kaunitz inadvertently blurted out that the best method of defense lay "in attacking the King of Prussia," but immediately recovered himself and declined to elaborate further.⁷ This confirmed other reports that "the terror of that Prince [Frederick II] is so great at Vienna as well as at all the other Courts of Germany that they seem to forget France. . . ."⁸ The Chancellor also insisted that nothing had transpired between Rouillé and Stahremberg which had not been explained already.⁹

George II became indignant upon hearing of "the offensive and indecent papers which were delivered to his minister in Vienna."¹⁰ He had based his plans for the security of Europe on an anticipated significant increase in the Austrian presence in the Netherlands. Fearful of the consequences of leaving both Flanders and Germany without a defense scheme, the King instructed his ministers at Hanover to prepare a new one at once.¹¹ Two things were thought necessary: a Russian diversion, and an army of Austrians, Hanoverians and Saxons ready to act defensively in Germany. These would free the Court of Vienna to send troops to join the Dutch, English, Hessians and Bavarians in the Low Countries. London probably would have to bear the brunt of the expenses, including a possible subsidy for Austria, but the peace of the continent would be assured.¹² The situation was serious and

once again the King offered to return to England if necessary.¹³

The receipt of the news that Austria had spurned England's modification of the Colloredo plan caused an uproar. In the United Provinces, Yorke wailed that:

Nothing is so certain as that the conduct of the Court [of Vienna] has overturned the whole alliance, and contributed more than anything in public affairs to annihilate the credit of the Princess Royal. The universal cry is that the Republic has nothing to do with this quarrel, and that it is in vain for them to think of defending the Austrian Netherlands, from whence they receive no assistance of any kind, and which are abandoned by the House of Austria itself to the mercy of France.¹⁴

The more radical groups in the Republic pressed Her Royal Highness to formally ask the French court whether it intended to invade the Low Countries as a result of the Anglo-French disputes in America. Yorke thought this would be the first step taken to obtain a neutrality from France and to overturn the Stadtholterate, "for there can be little doubt but France will purchase the ruin of our System by some trifling advantage and promises to this country, which must inevitably prevent all future resistance on their part."¹⁵

The growing anti-war sentiment even penetrated the Princess's council. One faction of the cabinet, led by Pensionary Stein, leaned toward neutrality and attempted to convince Her Royal Highness to allow the approach to France. The motion was blocked by the King's friends on the council, Prince Louis, the Greffier and Treasurer Hop, all of whom favored the System and the ties to England.¹⁶ This political skirmish reflected the wide-spread fear within the Republic of a French invasion and the dissatisfaction with current defense measures.

Before the news from Vienna arrived in England on 5 July, the major issues before the cabinet were how to break off the negotiations with France and how best to employ the English fleet gathered at Portsmouth. George II's instructions to his ministers, enclosed in Holderness's letter of 22 June, reached London on the twenty-eighth and caused a flurry of activity. The Inner Cabinet met the next day, and the entire Regency four days later.

The first meeting was held in Cumberland's apartments the evening of 29 June. The Duke recommended that if the negotiations broke down, the fleet should sail with hostile orders and begin the war in Europe without waiting for word from America, where hostilities must have occurred already.¹⁷ Newcastle and Hardwicke defeated this suggestion, arguing that the courts of Europe would differentiate between hostilities taken in North America, where the French were guilty of aggression, and on the continent, where they were not. The most probable result of such action, they insisted, would be an immediate invasion of Hanover.¹⁸ Moreover, if the English and French fleets met, hostilities would likely ensue even if the orders were peaceful or limited. For these reasons, the ministry kept Hawke at Spithead, contrary to George II's wishes, "until proper instructions can be settled."¹⁹

Where it could, the cabinet gave direct answers to the King's specific questions. The ministers advised that the talks be terminated if the French did not send a satisfactory reply within three weeks; that such an event did not necessitate either hostile orders or a declaration of war; and, that since Hawke's orders would depend on future circumstances, the cabinet could not prepare draft instructions for the King's approval. Recognizing that only George II could break off the

negotiations and commence hostilities, the ministry requested that it be authorized to make these decisions in His Majesty's absence in order to be able to react faster and more effectively in future situations.²⁰

The Council of Regents assembled on 1 July and endorsed the recommendations of the cabinet and its request for a delegation of authority.²¹ Newcastle sent the minutes of these two meetings by special courier to Hanover, as directed by the King, and took the opportunity to enclose several letters to Holdernes explaining the background of the decisions made.

George II had perceived correctly that there was disagreement within the cabinet on these issues. Cumberland strongly favored the termination of the negotiations and the immediate commencement of war by dispatching Hawke with hostile orders. He argued that nothing could be done on the continent that year by either side, even with the support of their allies, and so reasoned that swift action could reap benefits which could not be challenged for months to come. Newcastle, Granville and Hardwicke disagreed. In their opinion, the first mission of the navy was to protect the rights and possessions of the English crown and people from possible retaliation by France once Versailles learned of Boscawen's actions off Nova Scotia. The disadvantages of beginning a war in Europe still outweighed the advantages, for French retribution would not be eliminated, only postponed.²² In the end, even Cumberland and Anson admitted that Hawke's orders must "depend upon the situation of affairs, which in all probability, may, in three weeks time, be such as may determine this measure, one way or the other, to the satisfaction of everybody."²³ Caution and prudence again prevailed.²⁴

Yet Newcastle's position was still precarious. That Cumberland "certainly wishes nothing but war" was well known.²⁵ And while the ministry convinced His Royal Highness to forego the commencement of hostilities in Europe this time, the First Minister realized that he might not be as fortunate in later encounters. The cabinet thought that war was imminent. The Duke wished to begin hostilities with such éclat and success as to disable France temporarily and weaken her allies, while simultaneously encouraging England's friends. He viewed the possibility of alienating Spain as a "political risk which the military situation rendered it necessary to take."²⁶ Although the Duke had "declared strongly for a naval war," this was merely a shrewd move, calculated to enhance his popularity and to hasten an inevitable continental conflict.²⁷

Newcastle feared both the domestic and international political consequences of Cumberland's plan. To begin a war in Europe was diplomatic suicide for England, whether in 1755 or 1756, and the prospect of His Royal Highness regaining the level of favor and confidence in the Closet he had enjoyed during the last war frightened the First Minister. Newcastle attempted to lessen the Duke's influence with his father by withholding essential information from the two men while the monarch was abroad. However, both the King and Cumberland knew of the scheme, and this, in part, prompted George II to ask for the recommendations of all his advisors on the questions of the French negotiations and Hawke's orders. Furthermore, His Royal Highness's strong anti-French attitude was popular both in the country and the Closet. Newcastle lamented the vulnerability of the ministry "if we openly opposed a measure of vigor, in appearance, proposed and supported

by the Duke; and this is the unhappy situation we are in."²⁸ His solution, which the Regents adopted, was to request discretionary powers to act according to future circumstances. To gain time, the ministry postponed specific decisions, in the hope that events to come would dictate a clear response. If the King refused, "the D will certainly lay it [the delay] all upon me."²⁹

Word of Austria's insistence upon the initial terms of the Colloredo plan reached London three days after the ministry dispatched the special courier to Hanover. Recognizing the sensitivity of the information, Newcastle told only his closest political allies of the actions of the Court of Vienna.³⁰ He was convinced that Austria would be satisfied only when England secured subsidy treaties with Russia, Hesse, Saxony, Bavaria, Hanover and the Hofburg itself, yet the First Minister believed that these treaties would "go down well enough" if kept to a moderate figure.³¹ However, such a sum would go only a little way toward financing so many subsidies, and so Newcastle determined what the government could afford without raising a new tax.³²

The First Minister believed that England's foreign policy must be tailored to what she could afford. Fear of bankruptcy had been a major factor in London's decision to end the War of the Austrian Succession. Newcastle estimated that the expenses of the English armed forces at home and in North America for 1755 amounted to nearly £ 5 million.³³ Sir John Barnard, one of the leading financiers of the day, thought it impossible to raise more than this without levying a new tax and increasing the National Debt, and regarded the raising of £ 6 million in the final year of the last war as a "mad project" which would have ruined the government's credit if the peace had not been made quickly.³⁴

The banker believed that by raising only a single new tax or lottery, England could afford a colonial and naval war and still maintain the Sinking Fund.³⁵ He insisted, however, that the country could not afford the war in America and a continental venture of large enough proportion to merit success because Britain would bear almost the entire financial burden of a European war. Such a conflict could drag on for years and cause the government to collapse under the weight of an enormous debt.³⁶

On 11 July, the ministry, which had long pledged to help defend Hanover if it was attacked simply because of English actions, agreed with George II that he must look outside the System for the protection of his German possessions. Since England could not afford to launch a new series of alliances for the defense of Europe, Hardwicke, Newcastle and Robinson urged that the King confine himself to the defense of his own territories. The ministry would support him in this by paying for an augmentation of the Hanoverian army, and would welcome any other measures he might take alone as Elector.³⁷ With an Anglo-French rupture imminent, the King's German ministers pointed out the grave danger which faced Europe and Hanover if new defensive measures were not taken quickly against France and Prussia. But the backwardness of the Hofburg and The Hague so far had rendered such efforts very difficult.³⁸

Holdernessee, Münchhausen and Steinberg drew up a new blueprint for the preservation of the alliance and the protection of the King's electoral territories, while at Herrenhausen. The ministers made a number of critical assumptions: the Anglo-French dispute would not be settled peacefully; hostilities, which had occurred already on land and at sea in America, would force the termination of the negotiations, after

which, France would act offensively against England's continental allies; these allies would not concert for their mutual defense unless George II took a more active role in Europe; and, that when Austria's conditions were met, she would make full common cause with England and risk war with France and Prussia.³⁹

The purpose of the Herrenhausen plan was to win Austria's cooperation in Flanders against France by assuring her defense in Germany from Prussia. The new project called for the creation of large standing armies in the East, in Germany and in the Pays Bas. The proposed Russian treaty would satisfy the requirement for the first. A convention signed by Maria Theresa and the Kings of England and Poland in their electoral capacities would effect the second. This army would consist of 40,000 Austrians, 20,000 Saxons and a number of subsidy troops provided by Hanover. These soldiers, plus the Russian corps supplied by England, would protect the electorates of Hanover and Saxony, and the German estates of the Empress from Prussian or French aggression. The third force would be stationed in Flanders and consist of the 8000 Hessians recently hired by Britain, the 6000 Bavarians stipulated in the subsidy treaty of 1750, and 6000 Englishmen or troops in English pay. Austria, supported against Prussia by the Russians and the allied army in Germany, would send 25,000 troops to the Low Countries. The Republic, too, was expected to increase her forces there.⁴⁰

George II was careful not to endorse the plan. He allowed, not commanded, Holderness to send it to London, which the Secretary did on 6 July. The King wanted only Newcastle and Hardwicke to see it, unless they thought otherwise. They were to discuss it, evaluate its feasibility and desirability, and determine its chances of passing

through Parliament.⁴¹ He further indicated that he was unable to afford the expense of maintaining a substantial army in Germany without "some assistance" from England.⁴²

Newcastle did not receive the details of the Herrenhausen project or Keith's dispatches of 27 June until 12 July. The First Minister and the Lord Chancellor disapproved of the German plan for a number of reasons. The English share of the maintenance of the three armies would be nearly £ 2 million. The naval and colonial efforts in America, which cost £ 5 million that year and were sure to increase, were all the nation could afford. If the Herrenhausen plan was adopted, Britain would be paying £ 7 million per annum without actually being at war. No agreement or treaty had been signed yet and even if the armies were marshalled immediately, they would not be ready for two to six months, too late to be effectively used that year. France, on the other hand, could move into the Netherlands in a matter of days and seize the Low Countries before the mobilization of any of the allied forces. Austria would not send a single soldier until the Russians had been secured, which could take months. And Dutch participation hinged upon the Court of Vienna's⁴³ The ministers opposed raising troops which could not be employed and suffering expenses for the defense of a region which would probably fall. Moreover, one of the major purposes of the Herrenhausen plan was to contain Prussia, but it seemed doubtful that Frederick II would invade George II's territories merely because Louis XV wished it.⁴⁴

Although Newcastle and Hardwicke had formulated their response to the plan quickly, they were too busy to inform Hanover of their opinions for several days. For on 14 July, word arrived from America that Vice Admiral Boscawen had met the French squadron off Nova Scotia on 10 June,

and had captured two men of war, the Lys and the Alcide. The results of the clash between the English and French fleets in the North Atlantic were less than satisfactory. The Earl of Waldegrave conveyed the sentiment of the hour well in a note to Newcastle:

As to myself, I am really at a loss how to express myself, whether I should congratulate Your Grace on the success of His Majesty's fleet, or whether I should lament our misfortune that hostilities are now begun without that considerable advantage, which might animate His Majesty's subjects and dishearten the enemy.⁴⁵

Boscawen's orders pleased the people of the City of London, who did not blame the ministry for the admiral's lack of success. However, these bellicose men were "entirely for action without always considering the necessary consequence of it."⁴⁶ The ministers were less sanguine. Hardwicke, deeply disappointed and concerned, wrote Newcastle that "what we have done is either too little or too much."⁴⁷ Hostilities had been begun at great risk and expense, but with negligible results. Moreover, Boscawen wished to return to England because sickness had devastated his crews.⁴⁸

Word that the King had granted the requested discretionary powers arrived on the same day as the news from America, and fixed London with responsibility for any immediate response to the events overseas.⁴⁹ The Duke of Cumberland called a meeting of the Inner Cabinet on the evening of 15 July to determine a course of action. The ministers sent Hawke to Torbay with sixteen sail of the line to await further instructions.⁵⁰ The Regency would not meet for a week, and during the intervening time, the cabinet hoped that Versailles would clearly indicate how it would react to the news from America.

Once again, the Inner Cabinet was sharply divided as to what orders to give the fleet. Cumberland stated that if there was no real prospect for peace, England should make the most of its strength and of every available opportunity by striking at all French shipping, warships and merchantmen alike.⁵¹ Lord President Granville favored attacking any French warship but absolutely opposed falling upon French commerce in Europe at this stage. He feared that such action might drive the Republic to neutrality, alienate Spain, and unite all neutral nations against England.⁵² "Whereas if we wait but a very short time, France in all probability, will put us under a necessity of falling upon their trade in Europe, so as that no power can blame [us]."⁵³ Not convinced that France wanted war in lieu of a negotiated settlement, Granville thought that "it may be wise and honest to postpone for a time the executing a measure, which when once done, admits of no Conciliation but by dint of war; and the measure itself if executed, may be attended with very little profit or advantage."⁵⁴

Newcastle proposed a slightly different plan. He wanted the fleet to go to sea to show England's strength, to protect her trade, and to be in a position to strike at elements of the French navy and the East and West Indian convoys as they returned to France.⁵⁵ He wished to phrase the orders in such a manner that Hawke could attack "worthwhile" targets, but would not risk beginning hostilities in Europe over a single ship. The other cabinet members considered the admiral "too wise to do anything at all, which others, when done, were to pronounce he ought to be hanged for," and ridiculed the First Minister's attempts to limit Hawke by authorizing him to attack only groups of ten or more merchantmen or squadrons of at least three warships.⁵⁶

Eventually, Newcastle offered a practical compromise which, though rejected in favor of Granville's plan at the cabinet meeting on the evening of 21 July, was adopted the next morning when Lord Anson reconsidered his vote and sided with the First Minister.⁵⁷ If Hawke received instructions to fall upon any frigate, sloop or brig he met, a war might break out within forty-eight hours in which England might be seen as the instigator. To prevent this, Newcastle argued that the fleet should attack only ships of the line, all of which were either in port or at sea with major French squadrons. Those in harbor probably would not venture out alone once word was out that Hawke had sailed. And if the English and French fleets met at sea, Hawke's superior strength would insure a British victory and a crushing blow to France's navy. Moreover, by delaying hostilities in this manner, the ministry would gain enough time to learn the King's opinion of the orders, and perhaps for France to declare war or commence hostilities herself.⁵⁸ At any rate, the public was clamoring for action and this plan permitted the fleet to sail with the least possible risk.

Before the week was out, Hawke departed. In addition to his orders to capture French ships of the line and bring them back to England to be held as securities for the redress of French encroachments in the Ohio Valley, the admiral was instructed to prevent a juncture of France's Mediterranean and Atlantic squadrons and to bar the return of Dubois de la Motte to Brest. "It was war in all but name."⁵⁹

Newcastle steered the most moderate course possible. Despite assurances by the Spanish ambassador that Madrid would consider any action taken by Boscawen in North America against France to be defensive

and justifiable, the First Minister knew that England's position on the continent was not strong.⁶⁰ The poor behavior of Britain's allies concerned the King and his ministers in London. The Court of Vienna clearly wanted no part of an Anglo-French war until Russia had been secured, which could take months to arrange.

The situation at The Hague was no less frustrating. Sentiment against the System and in favor of neutrality in the event of an Anglo-French war was widespread and penetrated even the highest levels of government. The Princess Royal was hard-pressed just to increase her army, let alone renew the Saxon and Bavarian subsidy treaties or play a more active role in the defense of the Netherlands as Newcastle and Cumberland wished. Though the First Minister genuinely wished to help Her Royal Highness in this critical period, Newcastle firmly refused to give her the funds she had requested. What material good would £ 50-60,000 do toward the defense of Flanders in the face of Austrian intransigence and the hostility of the Dutch people? If the Princess Royal wanted the money as a show of English support, it should not come from the Civil List, where it could ill be afforded, but openly from Parliament. However, the only way that Parliament might vote the funds would be for the maintenance of the Stadtholterate, which likely would cause more harm than good within the Republic. Furthermore, Cumberland adamantly opposed giving money to any allies that year because of their poor conduct.⁶¹

Diplomatic relations between England and France remained intact at the beginning of July 1755. Although meaningful negotiations over the North American border disputes had ended long before, neither nation

wished to be responsible for terminating the peace process. The English ministry wanted the talks to be over and issued its tough 7 June paper to force the French to discontinue them. Versailles, however, was more pacific and less decisive than London had imagined, and did not rise to the bait. Tired of waiting for a French reply, the cabinet on 1 July asked for discretionary powers to break off the negotiations.

The Court of France finally acted. On 14 July, the same day that London received word of Boscawen's action off Nova Scotia, Rouillé sent the English a non-committal reply to their June memoir and authorized Mirepoix to return to Paris.⁶² When news of the naval engagement reached the French court at Compiègne on 18 July, the Foreign Minister immediately recalled the French ambassador from London and Bussy from Hanover.⁶³ Mirepoix received these instructions on 21 July, and left shortly after midnight without taking the customary leave.⁶⁴ Robinson retaliated the same day by ordering the return of Ruvigny De Cosne, the English chargé d'affaires in France.⁶⁵

The attempt to settle peacefully the Anglo-French boundary disputes in North America directly between the two courts collapsed with the breaking off of diplomatic relations on 22 July 1755. Conversations continued through devious channels and third parties for the remainder of that year and well into the next but to no avail.⁶⁶

Despite the rupture, neither side declared war. It was only in late August, after England had learned of Braddock's defeat, that the navy received orders to fall upon French shipping indiscriminately. By year's end, England had seized hundreds of French vessels and thousands of French sailors, and continued to do so in 1756, despite a French ultimatum to desist. The pacific Louis XV declined to participate in

the one-sided hostilities and thus give London a casus foederis. Only when England heard that the French had besieged the British garrison on Minorca did the ministry act. Recognizing a chance to label Versailles as the aggressor in Europe, London formally declared war on 18 May 1756. The French reluctantly followed suit on 9 June. Still, there were no hostilities on the continent itself that summer. This peaceful situation lasted until 29 August, when Frederick II, hoping to disrupt an Austro-Saxon-Russian conspiracy against Prussia, led his armies in a preemptive strike into Saxony and plunged Europe into the long anticipated general war.

ENDNOTES

¹By not mentioning the Saxon and Bavarian treaties, and by increasing the British contingent by 12,000 men over that of the Colloredo plan, Austria hoped to shift full responsibility for these subsidies to England.

²B.L. Add. MS. 32856, ff. 362-64, Réponse par écrit, Kaunitz to Keith, enclosed in *ibid.*, ff. 352-359, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 19 June 1755, Secret.

³*Ibid.*, f. 355, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 19 June 1755, Secret.

⁴*Ibid.*, ff. 524-25, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Most Secret; *ibid.*, f. 520, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Private and Secret.

⁵*Ibid.*, ff. 504-509, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Private, Most Private. Keith remarked that if the Chancellor's constant assurances of the importance of the Common Cause and the alliance against France were untrue, Kaunitz "must be the worst and falsest of men." *Ibid.*, f. 509.

⁶*Ibid.*, ff. 524-26, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Most Secret.

⁷*Ibid.*, f. 521, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Private and Secret.

⁸*Ibid.*, f. 378, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 29 June 1755, Private.

⁹*Ibid.*, f. 511, Keith to Holdernessee, Vienna, 27 June 1755, Apart and Secret.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, f. 438, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 29 June 1755.

¹¹*Ibid.*, f. 350.

¹²*Ibid.*, f. 379, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 29 June 1755, Private.

¹³*Ibid.*, f. 380, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 29 June 1755, Entre-nous.

¹⁴ Ibid., f. 466, Yorke to Newcastle, The Hague, 4 July 1755, Private.

¹⁵ Ibid., f. 467.

¹⁶ Ibid., ff. 468-69.

¹⁷ Ibid., f. 394, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Newcastle House, 30 June 1755, Monday.

¹⁸ Ibid., f. 395.

¹⁹ B.L. Add. MS. 32996, f. 150, Cabinet Minute, St. Jame's Palace, 29 June 1755.

²⁰ Ibid., ff. 150-51.

²¹ Ibid., ff. 160-62, Minute, Whitehall, 1 July 1755.

²² B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 432, Newcastle to Holderness, the Cockpit, 1 July 1755, Secret.

²³ Ibid., f. 435, Newcastle to Holderness, the Cockpit, 1 July 1755, Private.

²⁴ When they evaluated policy options, Newcastle and the ministry had to consider the domestic and international political situations, as well as the military balance of power both in Europe and overseas. Corbett in England and the Seven Years' War presents a balanced discussion of the many factors which tempered English policy toward France at this time. Charteris's analysis is less even handed in Cumberland and the Seven Years' War. The author fails to consider the complex diplomatic issues and uncritically accepts the Duke's simplistic views which were valid only in a short term military sense.

²⁵ B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 448, Newcastle to Holderness, Newcastle House, 2 July 1755, Entre-nous.

²⁶ Charteris, Cumberland and the Seven Years' War, p. 165.

²⁷ Dodington, Journal, p. 316.

²⁸ B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 449, Newcastle to Holderness, Newcastle House, 2 July 1755, Entre-nous.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., f. 559, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 6 July 1755.

³¹ Ibid., f. 560

³² Ibid., Newcastle believed that he might have been able to procure £ 1 million without raising a new tax, but estimated that such a large number of subsidy treaties would cost over £ 2 million per annum.

³³ B.L. Add. MS. 32857, f. 2, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 11 July 1755.

³⁴ Ibid., f. 3; *ibid.*, f. 46, Extract of a Conversation with Sir John Barnard, enclosed in Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 11 July 1755, Private and Particular.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Barnard went so far as to suggest that English interests might be served best if London abandoned the continent to France. By concentrating on the maritime and colonial war in which she was markedly superior, England could eventually recover Hanover and the Low Countries at the peace table. *Ibid.*, ff. 45-46, Extract of a Conversation with Sir John Barnard, enclosed in Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 11 July 1755, Private and Particular.

³⁷ Ibid., ff. 5-7, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 11 July 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 41-43, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Claremont, 11 July 1755, Private and Particular. George II already had 8000 Hessians available, and might easily procure more men from neighboring princes if he assured them that their troops would be used only in Germany for the defense of his dominions there. Newcastle had earlier told the King that he hoped to find £1 million to be used for specific measures on the continent, but this was now unlikely. And there was no money for a general war.

³⁸ B.L. Add. MS. 32856, ff. 537-38, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 6 July 1755.

³⁹ Ibid., ff. 539-540, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 6 July 1755, Most Secret.

⁴⁰ Ibid., ff. 543-46, *Precis*, enclosed in Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 6 July 1755, Most Secret; Eldon, England's Subsidy Policy, pp. 16-17.

⁴¹ Ibid., f. 541, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 6 July 1755, Most Secret.

⁴² Ibid., ff. 551-52, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 6 July 1755, Private; *ibid.*, f. 602, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 9 July 1755, 2: P.S., Entre-nous. Holdernessee later informed Newcastle that the sum was initially at £30-40,000 for an augmentation of the Hanoverian army but it had not been decided whether England was to pay for these troops once they were in the field.

⁴³ B.L. Add. MS. 32857, ff. 84-86, Newcastle to Hardwicke, Claremont, 13 July 1755, Most Secret; *ibid.*, f. 91, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 14 July 1755, at night; *ibid.*, ff. 159-66, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 18 July 1755, Draft.

⁴⁴Newcastle placed great weight on the fact that Frederick II's sister, the Duchess of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttle, had stated that her brother would not attack Hanover and would allow her husband to let his troops to George II. At the same time, the King was trying to arrange for the marriage of one of the Duchess's two daughters to the young Prince of Wales. These conversations, as well as the abortive interview attempt between George II and Frederick II, helped pave the way for the rapprochement begun in August between the two monarchs. Ibid., ff. 180-81, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 18 July 1755, Entre-nous.

⁴⁵Ibid., f. 113, Waldegrave to Newcastle, Kew, [15 July 1755], Tuesday Morning.

⁴⁶Ibid., f. 185, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 18 July 1755, Private.

⁴⁷Ibid., f. 91, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 14 July 1755, at night.

⁴⁸Ibid. When Boscawen finally arrived in England in the fall, his fleet was decimated. 2000 seamen had died at sea, 4000 were placed in hospitals, and more sent home because there was no room for them elsewhere. The ships were severely weather-beaten and needed extensive repairs. As a result, the Royal Navy's effectiveness was greatly reduced for many months. Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, Statesmen and Seapower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 127.

⁴⁹B.L. Add. MS. 32856, f. 590, Holdernessee to Newcastle, Hanover, 9 July 1755; *ibid.*, ff. 593-94, Holdernessee to Robinson, Hanover, 9 July 1755, Most Secret.

⁵⁰Dodington, Journal, p. 311.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.; Charteris, Cumberland and the Seven Years' War, p. 171.

⁵³B.L. Add. MS. 32857, f. 267, Granville to Newcastle, Hawnes, 20 July 1755.

⁵⁴Ibid., f. 268.

⁵⁵Ibid., f. 110, Newcastle to Holdernessee, the Cockpit, 15 July 1755.

⁵⁶Dodington, Journal, pp. 311-12.

⁵⁷B.L. Add. MS. 32857, f. 298, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 22 July 1755, Entre-nous.

⁵⁸Ibid., ff. 295-96, Newcastle to Holdernessee, Newcastle House, 22 July 1755, Private.

⁵⁹Corbett, J. S., England in the Seven Years' War, p. 62.

⁶⁰D'Abreu had informed Madrid that Boscawen must have had hostile orders, and Wall had approved of the measure. B.L. Add. MS. 32857, f. 182, Newcastle to Holderness, Newcastle House, 18 July 1755, Private and Apart.

⁶¹Ibid., ff. 461-63, Newcastle to Yorke, Claremont, 4 July 1755; ibid., f. 485, Hardwicke to Newcastle, Powis House, 5 July 1755.

⁶²Pease, p. lvi.

⁶³Ibid.; Waddington, R., Louis XV, p. 104.

⁶⁴B.L. Add. MS. 32857, f. 279, Mirepoix to Newcastle, London, 21 July 1755; Dodington, Journal, p. 312.

⁶⁵P.R.O., S.P.F., France, 250, Robinson to De Cosne, 22 July 1755, cited in Legg, British Diplomatic Instructions 1689-1789, vol. 7, France, p. 52.

⁶⁶Savelle, Canadian Boundary, pp. 80-83.

EPILOGUE

Events in North America between England and France played a significant role in the complex pattern of European diplomacy in the years between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War. Fear that an inevitable Anglo-French colonial war would spread to the continent was a major factor in the determination of foreign policy at all the courts of Europe. At the same time, the ministries at London and Versailles based their actions in the New World upon their perceived positions vis à vis one another on the continent.

George II considered catholic France the natural hereditary enemy of his Maison and Crown, and spent much of his reign trying to reduce French power and influence throughout the world. France was too powerful for England to defeat singlehandedly, so the King endeavored to recreate the Grand Alliance, the only coalition to beat the French in recent years. But while George II saw himself as another William III, the balance of power in Europe had altered significantly since 1701. The Grand Alliance had ceased to be a political possibility. Traditional diplomatic ties were no longer sacrosanct. Advocates of Realpolitik such as Louis XIV, Frederick II, Cardinal Fleury and Count Kaunitz, all acted upon this principle after 1713.

This paper provides a detailed examination of the formulation of English foreign policy. Yet it is not a definitive study. Several domestic issues were not addressed, including the struggle for power

and leadership in the House of Commons between the Newcastle ministry, Henry Fox and William Pitt, and the role of Leicester House and the party of the young Prince of Wales. Moreover, the commercial and political lies between England and her colonies, and the ministry and the City of London were not discussed. While these, too, influenced foreign affairs, they are beyond the scope of this work.

The study, however, does give insight into the policy-making process of the Newcastle ministry during a period of diplomatic flux. Prior to July 1755, English policy toward the continent was based upon the Old System, which depended upon Austrian support against France and later Russian support against Prussia. Prompted by the intransigence of the Hofburg and activity in America, the Herrenhausen plan was a major break in this pattern. By the end of August, Newcastle had already decided to use the Russian subsidy as a means of replacing Austria with Prussia as the cornerstone of the defense of the King's German dominions. The period from September 1754 to July 1755 marks a period of transition in English diplomacy, the study of which yields a better understanding of the evolving nature of eighteenth century society and culture in Europe.

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